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PAULINE DE MEULIEN.

CHAPTER I.

Towards the close of the year 1834, we were assembled one Saturday evening in a little chamber adjoining Grisier's fencing-rooms, listening, foils in hand and cigars in mouth, to the wise theories of our professor, often interrupted with anecdotes bearing on the subject, when the door opened and Alfred de Nerval entered.

Those who have read my "Travels in Switzerland" will no doubt remember that this young gentleman acted as cavalier to a mysterious and veiled lady, whom I saw for the first time at Fleulen, when I was running with Francesco to regain the boat which was to convey us to the stone of Guillaume Tell. They will not, then, have forgotten, that far from waiting for me, Alfred de Nerval, whom I expected to have as my fellow-traveller, had hastened the departure

of the boat, and quitting the bank when I was only three hundred paces off, made a sign with his hand at once of adieu and friendship, which I translated into these words:—"I am very sorry, my dear friend; I would have been happy to see you, but I am not alone." To this I replied by another sign, which meant, "I understand perfectly." And I stopped, and bowed in obedience to this decision so severe, as it appeared to me. On my return to the hotel, I then inquired if any one knew this lady; but they told me that all the information they could give me was, that she appeared to suffer exceedingly, and that she was named Pauline.

I had completely forgotten this *rencontre*, when on visiting the hot-water spring which supplies the baths of Pfeffers, I met (perhaps they may remember it), in the long subterraneous gallery Alfred de Nerval, giving his arm to this same lady of whom I had had a glimpse at Fleulen, and who there manifested a desire to remain unknown, after the manner I have related. This time again she appeared to me to desire to preserve the same *incognita*, for her first movement was to return.

Unfortunately, however, the path on which we

were walking would not allow of any one deviating to the right or to the left: it was a sort of bridge composed of two wet and slippery planks, which, instead of being thrown across a precipice, at the bottom of which murmured the Tamina over its black marble bed, were placed along the side of the subterraneous gallery, at about forty feet above the torrent, supported by beams driven into the rock. My friend's mysterious companion saw then, that flight was impossible; so, taking courage, she lowered her veil and continued to advance towards me. I then related the singular impression this lady, pale and light as a shadow, had made upon me, walking to the very edge of the abyss without disturbing herself more than if she already belonged to another world.

On seeing her approach me, I stood up against the wall, so as to occupy the least possible space. Alfred wanted her to pass alone, but she refused to leave his arm, so that in an instant we were all three on a space of not more than two feet; but, quick as lightning, this strange lady, like one of those fairies who stoop over the border of torrents, and allow their scarfs to float in the foam of the cascades, leant against the precipice, and

passed as if by a miracle; still not so rapidly, however, but that I could catch a glimpse of her calm sweet face, pale and emaciated as it was by suffering. Then it struck me that this was not the first time I had seen that countenance; it awoke in my mind a reminiscence of some other period,—a recollection of drawing-rooms, balls, and *fêtes*. I thought that I had known this lady, with the now sad and wasted countenance, joyous, healthy, and crowned with flowers,—carried away, in the midst of perfumes and music, in some languid waltz or bounding galop. But where was it?—I knew nothing more about it. How long ago?—Impossible for me to say. It was a vision, a dream, an echo of my memory of which nothing was precise or real, and which had escaped me, as if I might have wished to seize a phantom. I returned, promising myself to see her again, though I might have been indiscreet to have accomplished this end: but on my return, although I had only been absent half an hour, neither Alfred nor she were any longer at the baths of Pfeffers.

About two months after this second meeting, I found myself at Baveno, near the Lac Majeur. It was a beautiful evening in autumn, the sun

had just disappeared behind the chain of the Alps, and the shades of night were seen in the east, which already began to be studded with stars. The window of my room was on the same floor as a terrace full of flowers. I walked upon this terrace, and found myself in the middle of a little forest of laurestinas, myrtles, and orange-trees. What sweet things are flowers! It is not enough to be surrounded by them; we want to enjoy them close to us. Wherever they are found,—flowers in the field, or flowers in the garden,—it is the instinct of man, woman and child to pluck them to make a bouquet of them. Their perfume follows them, and their brightness is their own. I could not resist the temptation. I broke off some sweet-smelling branches, and went to lean on the balustrade of red granite which commands a view of the lake, from which it is only separated by the principal road from Geneva to Milan.

I had scarcely got there when the moon rose from the Sesto side, and her rays began to glide to the sides of the mountains which bounded the horizon, and on the water, which slept at my feet tranquil and shining like a mirror. Everything was in repose; not a murmur came from the

earth, the lake, or the sky. The night commenced her course in a majestic and subdued stillness, but soon after there arose from a clump of trees which grew on my left, and whose roots bathed in the water, the harmonious and brilliant song of a nightingale; it was the only sound that could be heard, and it was sustained for an instant guttural and quivering, when it stopped suddenly at the end of a roulade. As if this noise had awoke some other of quite a different nature, the distant rolling of a carriage was heard coming from Doma d'Ossola. The song of the nightingale began again, and I listened to no other sound than the bird of Juillette. When it ceased, I again heard the wheels of the carriage much nearer: it came quickly. Quick however as was its course, my melodious neighbour still had time to continue his nightly prayer; but this time scarcely had he carolled forth his last note, than I perceived at the turning of the road, a post-chaise drawn at a gallop by two horses, on the road which passed before the inn. At two hundred paces from me the postilion noisily cracked his whip, to apprise his companion of his arrival. In fact, almost immediately the large gate of the inn turned upon its hinges, and another chaise

turned out; at the same instant the carriage stopped beneath the terrace on the balustrade of which I was leaning.

The night was so pure, so clear, and so refreshing, that the travellers had lowered the hood of the chaise to enjoy the sweet balmy air. There were two of them; a young gentleman and a young lady. The lady was wrapped up in a large shawl or cloak; her head was leaning on the arm of the young man, who supported her. At this moment the postilion came forward to light the lamps of the carriage; a ray of light passed across the faces of the travellers, and I recognized Alfred de Nerval and Pauline.

Always him, and always her; it seemed that a higher power than mere chance caused both of us to meet. Always her, but still so changed since Pfeffers, so pale, so dying, that she was only a shadow. Nevertheless these faded traits recalled to my mind that vague image of a lady who slept at the very end of my memory, and who at each of these appearances, mounted to its surface, and glided across my thoughts like a dream. I was just about to call to Alfred, but I remembered how much his companion wished not to be recognized; and notwithstanding the ex-

pression of such melancholy, pity constrained me towards her, that I wished her to know that some one prayed that her soul, trembling and ready to take its flight, should not abandon the graceful body it animated without some friendly notice. I took a visiting card from my pocket and wrote on the back, "God guards the traveller, consoles the afflicted, and cures the suffering." I put the card into the middle of the bouquet I had gathered, and threw it into the carriage. The postilion started directly, but I had time to see Alfred lean out of the carriage to bring my card close to the light. Then he turned to my side, and made a recognition with his hand as the chaise disappeared at an angle of the road.

The noise of the vehicle grew faint, but without being interrupted this time by the song of the nightingale. Though I turned from the side of the thicket and spent another hour on the terrace, I waited in vain. Then a very sad thought took possession of me. I figured to myself that this bird which had sung, was the soul of the young girl which sang its song of adieu to the earth, and that as it did not sing again, that it had already returned to heaven.

The charming situation of the inn, placed be-

tween where the Alps end and Italy begins,—this calm, and at the same time animated sight of the Lac Majeur, with its three islands, one of which is a garden, the other a village, and the third a palace,—the first snows of winter, which covered the mountains, and the last heats of autumn which came from the Mediterranean,—all this detained me a week in Baveno. Then I departed for Arona, and from Arona for Sesto Calende.

There awaited me a last remembrance of Pauline there. The star I had seen pass across the sky was extinguished. There that foot so light had left a tomb at the edge of the precipice, and wasted youth, faded beauty and broken heart, all were engulfed under one stone, which closed as mysteriously on this corpse as the veil of life had been drawn over her countenance, and had only left for public curiosity the first name of "*Pauline.*"

I went to see this tomb. Contrary to the Italian tombs which are in churches, this was placed in a charming garden on the summit of a woody hill, which commanded a view of the lake. It was evening; the stone began to look white in the rays of the moon. I sat down near it, forcing my thoughts to seize all scattered and

floating recollections of this young lady; but again my memory was rebellious. I could only mingle phantoms without form, and I gave over penetrating into this mystery till the day when I should see Alfred de Nerval again.

One can easily understand now, how much his unexpected appearance at the moment when I was thinking least of him, engrossed at once my mind, my heart, and my imagination with new ideas. In an instant I saw all—that boat which escaped me on the lake; that subterranean bridge, like a vestibule of hell, where the travellers appear to be shadows; that little inn of Baveno, at the foot of which had passed the funeral carriage; lastly, that white stone, on which, in the rays of the moon gliding between the branches of orange-trees and laurestinas, one might read the only epitaph, the Christian name of the dead, and perhaps unfortunate young lady.

So I rushed towards Alfred, as a man imprisoned a long time in a dungeon, rushes to the light pouring in through a door which some one has opened. He smiled sadly in giving me his hand, as if to say he understood me; it was then I involuntarily made a backward movement, which told me in some way, that Alfred an old friend

of fifteen years, did not take for a simple movement of curiosity the feeling which had prompted me to advance towards him.

He sat down. He was one of Grisier's best pupils, although he had not been seen in the fencing-rooms for nearly three years. The last time he came, he was to fight a duel the next day; and not yet knowing what weapons he was to use, he came at all events to keep his hand in with the professor. Grisier had never seen him since that time; he had only heard that he had left France, and lived in London.

Grisier was as jealous of the reputation of his pupils as he was of his own; he had no sooner exchanged compliments with him, than he put a foil into his hand, and chose from amongst us an adversary of Alfred's skill—it was, I remember, poor Labattut, who went to Italy, and who found at Pisa an unknown and solitary grave.

At the third pass Labattut's foil struck the handle of his adversary's weapon, and breaking two inches from the button in passing through the guard, tore the sleeve of his shirt which was stained with blood. Labattut threw aside his foil immediately, he thought with us that Alfred was seriously wounded.

Happily it was only a scratch; but on lifting up the sleeve of his shirt, Alfred showed us another wound which must have been more serious—a pistol-ball had gone through the flesh of the shoulder.

"Why," said the astonished Grisier, "I never knew you had that wound."

Now Grisier knew us all, just as a nurse does a child. Not one of his pupils ever had a prick on the body, but he knew the date and cause of it. I am sure he could write a history, very amusing and full of scandal, if he wished to relate the episodes of the wounds of which he knew the antecedents; but that would make too much sensation in Paris, and also injure the prestige of his establishment: he will write posthumous memoirs, no doubt.

"That is the one," replied Alfred, "I received the day after I was last here to practice with you, and the day I received it I started for England."

"I have often told you," said Grisier, "never to fight with pistols. It is a general rule. The sword is the weapon of the courageous and the gentleman, and the sword is the most precious relic that history confides to us of great men who have made the country illustrious. One talks of

the sword of Charlemagne, the sword of Bayard, the sword of Napoleon. Who ever talks of their pistols? The pistol is a brigand's weapon. It is the pistol at the throat that causes false bills to be signed. It is with a pistol in the hand that a diligence is stopped in the middle of a wood. It is with a pistol that the bankrupt blows out his brains. The pistol! Bah! The sword is happily the companion, the confidant, the friend, of man —it guards his honour, as it also avenges it."

"Well, but with this conviction," replied Alfred, smiling, "how is it that you have fought for the last two years with pistols?"

I!—oh, that is another thing; I may fight with what I like. I am a fencing-master, and then there are circumstances under which you cannot refuse the conditions imposed upon you."

"Well, I found myself in one of those circumstances, my dear Grisier, and you see that I did not get badly out of it."

"Yes—with a ball in the shoulder!"

'That is always better than a ball in the heart."

"May we know the cause of this duel?"

"Pardon me, my dear Grisier, but all this history is still a secret, later you will know."

"Pauline?" whispered I to him.

"Yes," replied he.

"You are sure we shall know it?" said Grisier.

"Certain," replied Alfred; "and to prove it, I will take Alexander home to supper, and relate it to him, this evening; so that, some fine day, when there will be no inconvenience in telling it, you will find it in some volume, entitled, '*Contes Bruns or Contes Bleus.*' Till then, have patience."

Grisier was obliged to content himself. Alfred took me home to supper as he had promised, and related Pauline's history to me. The only impediment which existed to its publication has disappeared. Pauline's mother is dead, and with her is extinct the family and the name of this unfortunate creature, whose adventures appear to have belonged to an epoch or a locality very different to those in which we now live.

CHAPTER II.

"You know," said Alfred to me, "that I was studying painting when my good uncle died—he who left to my sister and myself thirty thousand livres income each."

I made an affirmative sign to what Alfred said, out of respect to the memory of him who had done so good an action before taking leave of the world.

"From that time," continued the narrator, "I gave up painting, except as a relaxation; I resolved to travel: to see Scotland, the Alps, and Italy. I made arrangements with my notary, and set out for Havre, wishing to commence with England."

"At Havre, I learnt that Dauzats and Jadin were on the other side of the Seine, in a little village named Trouville; I did not wish to leave France without shaking hands with two fellow-students. I took the packet-boat, and in two hours after I was at Honfleur, and the next morning at Trouville. Unfortunately they had

gone away the day before. You remember that little port, with its population of fishermen: it is one of the most picturesque in Normandy. I remained there some days, which I employed in visiting the environs; then, in the evening, seated in the chimney-corner of my respectable hostess, Madame Oseraie, I listened to the recital of strange enough adventures, of which for the last three months, the department of the Calvados, the Lairet and the channel had been the scene. They were about thefts committed with astonishing skill or audacity; travellers had disappeared between the villages of Buisson and Sallenelles. The postilion had been found blindfolded tied to a tree, the postchaise in the road, and the horses grazing quietly in the adjoining meadow. One evening when the receiver-general of Caen, was giving a supper to a young Parisian named Horace de Beuzeval and two of his friends, who had come to pass the hunting season at the chateau de Burcy, about fifteen leagues from Trouville, his strong box was broken open and seventy thousand francs stolen. At last the tax-gatherer of Pont l'Evêque, who was going to make a payment of twelve thousand francs at Lisieux, was murdered, and his body, thrown into the

Touques, and found on the bank of this little river, had made known the murder: the perpetrators of it had remained perfectly unknown, in spite of the activity of the Parisian police, who, alarmed at this system of highway robbery, had sent some of their cleverest agents into those parts. These events cast over the whole of Normandy, a terror hitherto unknown in this good country, renowned for its advocates and its pleaders, but by no means picturesque as the place of brigands and assassins. As for me, I avow that I put no great faith in all these stories, which appeared to me to belong rather to the deserted gorges of Sierra, or to the uncultivated mountains of Calabria, than to the rich plains of Falaise and to the fertile valleys of Pont Audemer, scattered with villages, castles, and farms. Robbers had always appeared to me in the middle of a forest or in caves. Now in all the three departments there was not a burrow that would merit the name of cave, nor a thicket which could have the presumption to call itself a forest. However, I was soon forced to believe in the reality of these tales. A rich Englishman coming from Havre to Alençon with his wife, was stopped within half a league of Dives where he was to obtain a relay.

The postilion, gagged and bound, was thrown into the carriage in the place of those he was driving, and the horses who knew their road, had arrived in the ordinary way at Ranville, and had stopped at the post-house, where they had remained quietly waiting to be unharnessed : in the morning a stable-boy on opening the gate, had found the chaise only left to the care of the poor gagged postilion.

" On being conducted before the mayor, this man swore that he had been stopped on the road by four men in masks, who, by their apparel, appeared to belong to the lowest class of society; that they had compelled him to stop and let the travellers out. Then, that the Englishman having tried to defend himself, a pistol was fired, and almost immediately he heard groans and cries; but he had seen nothing, being upon his face upon the ground; besides, he was instantly gagged and thrown into the carriage, which brought him to the post-house as carefully as if he had driven the horses, instead of them guiding themselves.

" The gendarmes set off immediately for the place of the catastrophe. They found the body of the Englishman in a ditch, stabbed in two places with a poniard. No trace of his wife could

be discovered. This new murder took place scarcely a dozen leagues from Trouville; the body of the victim had been taken to Caen. Even if I had been as incredulous as Saint Thomas, there was no room for doubt, for in five or six hours at least I could have gone as he did, and put my fingers into the wounds.

"Three or four days after this horrible event, and just before my departure, I resolved to make a last visit to the coast I was about to leave. I ordered the boat I had hired for a month to be got ready, and seeing the sky clear and likely to continue so, I had my dinner and my drawing materials taken on board, and set sail, unaccompanied by any one."

"Ah," interrupted I, "I know your pretensions to being a sailor, and I remember you served your apprenticeship between the bridge of the Tuileries and the bridge de la Concorde, in a canoe."

"Yes," continued Alfred; "but this time my pretension nearly cost me my life. At first all was right. I had a small fishing-boat with one sail, which I could manœuvre with the rudder. The wind came from Havre, and the little craft went through the scarcely agitated sea with a

truly marvellous rapidity. I had sailed in this manner about eight or ten leagues in the space of three hours, when suddenly the wind fell, and the sea became calm as a lake, just as I arrived at the opening of the Orne. On my right hand were the rocks of Lyon, and on my left the ruins of a sort of abbey, contiguous to the chateau de Burcy. It was a landscape already, and I had only to copy it to make a picture. I let down my sail and began to draw.

"I was so absorbed with my drawing, that I do not know how long I worked, when I felt one of those hot breezes which announce the approach of a storm; and at the same time noticed, that the sea changed from its every-day green to a grey colour. I stood out to sea, when a flash of lightning shot across the heavens, now covered with such black and heavy clouds, that it appeared to cleave a chain of mountains. I knew that there was not a moment to be lost. The wind, as I hoped on setting out in the morning, had changed with the sun; so I hoisted my little sail, and hugging the coast, steered for Trouville so that I might run ashore in case of danger. But I had hardly made a quarter of a league, when I saw my sail flap against the mast. I let go the sail, and unshipped

the mast immediately, for I distrusted this apparent calm. In a minute several currents crossed each other; the sea began to rise and a loud clap of thunder was heard. This was a warning not to be despised, for the storm increased with the rapidity of a racehorse. I took off my coat, and taking an oar in each hand I began to make for the shore with all my strength.

"I had about two leagues to row before reaching it; happily it was high-tide, and although the wind was contrary, or rather there was no real wind except squalls which came from every point, the waves would drive me to land. I did wonders, rowing with all my might: the tempest, however, went faster than I did, for it soon overtook me. To add to this misfortune it began to grow dark; nevertheless, I yet hoped to reach the shore before it was night.

"Thus was passed a dreadful hour. My boat, tossed about like a nutshell, followed every undulation of the waves, rising and falling with them. I continued to row, but perceiving that I was uselessly tiring myself, and knowing that I should be obliged to save my life by swimming, I took the oars from the rowlocks, and placed them alongside the mast and the sail at the bottom

the boat. I only kept on my body my trowsers and shirt. I cast away everything that would impede my movements. Two or three times I was on the point of throwing myself into the sea, but the lightness of my boat saved me; she floated like a cork and did not ship a drop of water, only I feared that every moment she would upset. Once I thought I felt her strike; but the sensation was so light and so rapid, that I hardly dared hope it was true. The darkness, besides, was so profound, that I could not distinguish any object twenty paces before me, so that I knew not how far I was from the shore.

"Suddenly I felt a violent shock—there could be no doubt this time that I had struck; but was it upon a rock or upon the sand? A wave floated me again, and for some moments I felt myself carried away with violence. At last the boat was urged forward with such force, that when the sea went back it was stranded. I did not lose a moment, but took my paletot and jumped overboard, leaving all the rest to their fate. The water was only up to my knees, and before the wave (which I saw coming like a mountain) could overtake me, I was safe upon the beach.

"You may well imagine I lost no time, so

throwing my coat over my shoulders, I advanced rapidly towards the beach. Soon I felt I was walking on those round flints which are called pebbles, and which indicate high-water mark. I continued to advance for sometime longer. The road had again changed, I was now walking amongst bushes which grew on the downs; so, having nothing more to fear, I stopped.

"What a magnificent sight is the sea, as I saw it this night, during a storm of thunder and lightning. It is the image of the chaos of destruction. It is the only element to which God has given the power to revolt against Him, crossing its waves with His lightnings. The ocean appeared like an immense chain of moving mountains, the summits confounded with the clouds, the valleys deep as abysses! At each thunderclap, a pale light glanced from their tops to the base, and was extinguished in those depths—shut as soon as opened, opened as soon as shut! I contemplated with awe this prodigious sight which Vernet wished to see, and saw uselessly from the mast of the vessel to which he had lashed himself. For never can human pencil paint that dreadful grandeur, and that terrible majesty!

"I would probably have remained there all night, listening and looking, if I had not felt large drops of rain in my face. Although we were in September, the nights were already cold; I bethought me where I might obtain shelter from this rain. Then, as I remembered the ruins I had observed from the sea, and which ought not to be far from that part of the coast where I had landed, I continued to advance by a rapid declivity. Soon I found myself on a kind of platform: I continued to advance, for I saw before me a dark mass which I could not distinguish; but whatever it was, it might offer me a shelter; at length, by a flash of lightning, I recognized the dilapidated door of a chapel, which I entered, and found myself in a cloister. I looked for the least decayed place, and sat down in a corner in the shade of a pillar, and resolved to wait for morning, as, not knowing the coast I could not risk the chance of finding a dwelling. Besides, I had often passed worse nights than this during my hunts in La Vendée, and in the Alps.

"The only thing that disturbed me, was a certain gnawing of the stomach, which reminded

me that I had not eaten anything since ten o'clock that morning, when I suddenly remembered that I had told Madame Oseraie to put something in my pockets. I soon found that kind hostess had not forgotten my request, for in one there was a small loaf, in the other a bottle of rum. This was a supper perfectly adapted to the circumstances, and as soon as I had finished it, I felt a genial warmth diffusing itself through my limbs, which had begun to feel benumbed. My thoughts, which before had assumed a dullness, in the expectation of a famishing watch, were re-animated as soon as nature was supplied. I felt a drowsiness brought on by fatigue, so I wrapped myself up in my coat and leaning up against my pillar was soon asleep, lulled by the noise of the sea breaking upon the shore and the wind blowing among the ruins.

"I had slept for about two hours, when I was awoke by the noise of a door creaking on its hinges and striking against the wall. I opened my eyes wide, as most people do in a disturbed sleep; then I got up immediately, taking the precaution to hide behind my pillar. But

although I looked around, I neither saw nor heard anything; nevertheless I was not the less on my guard, being fully convinced that the noise which had awoke me had really been heard, and that I had not been deceived by the illusion of a dream."

CHAPTER III.

"The wind had gone down, and although the sky was still partially covered with thunder-clouds, the moon occasionally shone forth. During one of these intervals of her light—so soon to be turned into darkness—I withdrew my observation from the door which I thought I had heard open, to look about me. I was, as well as I could make out in the middle of an old abbey in ruins. As well as I could judge from what remained of it, I was in the chapel. On my right and on my left were the two corridors of the cloisters, supported by Norman arches; whilst in front some stones, broken and laid flat in the middle of the long grass, constituted the little cemetery where the former inhabitants of the cloister had come to rest from life, at the foot of the stone cross, which, though mutilated was still standing.

"You know," continued Alfred, "and all brave men avow, that physical influences have an immense power over the impressions of the

soul. I had just escaped the day before from a storm. I had arrived half frozen, in the midst of unknown ruins. I had fallen asleep from fatigue; troubled soon after by an extraordinary noise in this solitude. At last upon waking up, I had found myself upon the very scene even, where those thefts and murders had been committed which for the last two months had desolated Normandy. I found myself alone without arms, and as I have told you in that frame of mind, where the physical antecedents prevent the benumbed senses from regaining their proper energy. You will not be surprised then, that all the fireside stories came into my mind, so that I remained standing and immovable behind my pillar, instead of lying down and trying to sleep. My conviction was so great that an earthly noise had awoke me, that in searching the corners of the cloisters and looking out into the cemetery, my eyes constantly returned to this door sunk into the wall, through which I was certain some one had entered. Twenty times I was about to go and listen at this door, to try if I could hear some noise to enlighten my doubts; but to arrive at it, I must absolutely cross over a space on which the moonlight played. Now, some other

man might like me be hidden in this cloister and escape my sight, as I might escape his; that is to say, remaining immovable in the shadow.

At the end of a quarter of an hour all about this ruin had become so calm and silent, that I resolved to profit by the first moment a cloud might obscure the moon, and pass over the space of fifteen or twenty yards which separated me from this door. The moon soon reappeared and the darkness which followed was so profound, that I hoped to be able to accomplish my resolution without danger. I slowly let go my pillar, to which until then I had clung like a gothic sculpture, then gliding from it to the other pillars, holding my breath and listening at each step, I arrived at last at the wall of the corridor. I groped my way along it, and at last I reached the steps which led under a vault. I descended three stairs and touched the door.

"For ten minutes I listened without hearing anything, and at last my first conviction gave way to doubt. I began to think again that a dream had deceived me, and that I was the only inhabitant of these ruins which had afforded me an asylum. I was just on the point of leaving the door to regain my pillar, when the moon

reappeared and lighted up again the space which I must cross over to regain my post. I was about to set off in spite of this inconvenience, which indeed had ceased to be one to me, when a stone detached itself from the vault and fell. I heard the noise it made, and although I knew the cause, I trembled as if it had been a warning, and instead of following my first intention, I remained some time longer under the shadow of the vaults. Suddenly I thought I distinguished a distant and prolonged noise, as if a door had been shut at the end of a subterraneous passage: soon distant steps were again heard; then they came nearer.

"I heard some one coming up the deep stair to which the three steps I had descended belonged. In a minute the moon again disappeared. With a single bound I jumped into the corridor, and going backwards with my arms extended behind me and my eye fixed on the door which I had just quitted, I regained my protecting column and resumed my place.

"Again I heard the creaking sound—the door opened and shut; then a man appeared coming half out of the shadow. He stopped for a minute to listen and look about him, but seeing every-

thing quiet, he entered the corridor, and advanced to the end opposite to where I stood. He had not taken ten steps, when I lost sight of him, it was so dark. Soon, however, the moon reappeared, and I saw the mysterious unknown at the end of the little cemetery with a spade in his hand. He raised two or three spadefuls of earth, and threw something which I could not see into the hole he had made; and, in order to hide all trace of what he had been doing, he placed a large gravestone on the top. Having taken these precautions, he again looked about him; but, seeing and hearing nothing, he laid his spade against a pillar of the cloister, and disappeared under a vault.

"The time had been short, and the scene which I have just related took place at some distance from where I stood; nevertheless, in spite of the rapidity of the deed, and distance of the person, I could make out that he was a young man of about twenty-eight or thirty, with light hair, and of middle height. He was dressed in trousers of blue linen cloth, such as are usually worn by peasants on holidays. But there was something about him that showed me that he did not belong to the class of people his dress repre-

sented. He had a hunting-knife hanging from his waist, for I saw its hilt shining by the moonlight. As to his figure, it would be difficult to give a precise description of it, but I saw enough to enable me to recognize him if we should ever again happen to meet.

"You will imagine that this strange scene sufficed to take away for the rest of the night not only all hope, but also all idea of sleep. I remained standing, without feeling at all fatigued, entirely given up to the thousand thoughts which crossed my mind. I determined, at all hazards, to solve this mystery. However, for the present the thing was impossible, for I was, as I have said without arms. Then, I considered whether it would not be better to make a deposition, rather than to attempt myself an adventure, at the end of which I might, like Don Quixote, find some windmill. Consequently, at daybreak I followed the road from the door by which I had entered, and soon found myself on the declivity of the mountain. A vast fog covered the sea, so I descended to the shore waiting for it to disperse. In half an hour the sun rose, and his first rays dissolved the vapours which covered the ocean, still rough and angry after last night's storms.

"I found my boat stranded on the beach. But, besides the low tide leaving it impossible for me to launch it, one of the planks in the bottom was broken, so that it was useless for me to think of using it to return to Trouville. Happily, there were a great many fishermen on the coast, and in about half an hour I descried a boat; soon it was within hailing distance, and I made a sign and hailed it. I was both seen and heard, and the boat steered for the shore. I put into it the mast, the sail, and the oars of my own boat, which might be carried away by the next tide. As to the boat, I left it; its owner would come himself, and see if it could be made serviceable, and I would recompense him either by paying for the repairs or the whole loss.

"The fishermen who took me off like a new Robinson Crusoe, had just come from Trouville. They recognized me, and testified their joy at finding me alive. They had seen me start the day before, and knowing that I had not returned, had imagined me lost. I related to them my shipwreck, and told them I had passed the night behind a rock; and, in my turn, I asked them what those ruins, which were on the summit of the mountain, and which we began to catch

sight of on getting farther from the shore, were called.

"They told me that they were called the 'Abbaye de Grand Pré,' adjoining the park of the Chateau de Burcy, where Count Horace de Beuzeval lived.

"This was the second time the name had been mentioned before me, and it made my heart vibrate, in calling to mind an old remembrance. The Count Horace de Beuzeval was Mademoiselle Pauline de Meulien's husband."

"Pauline de Meulien!" cried I, interrupting Alfred. "Pauline de Meulien!" and all my recollection returned. "Yes, that was it! She was the lady I met with you in Switzerland and Italy. We were together at the Princess B.'s, at the Duc de F.'s, at Madame de M.'s. How did I not recognize her, pale and emaciated as she was? Oh! a charming woman, nevertheless, full of talent and wit, with magnificent black hair, and lovely eyes. Poor creature—poor creature! Oh, I remember and recognize her now."

"Yes," replied Alfred, in an agitated voice, "you are right; she recognized you also, and that was why she shunned you so. She was an angel of beauty and grace, you know; for you

have said you saw us together more than once. But this you do not know—that I loved her then with all my heart and soul, and I would certainly have tried to become her husband, if, at that time, I had had the fortune I now possess; but I was poor in comparison to her. I understood then that if I continued to see her, I might waste all my future happiness, and in return get, perhaps, a disdainful look or a humiliating refusal. I started for Spain, and whilst at Madrid I learned that Pauline de Meulien had married Count Horace de Beuzeval.

"The new thoughts which arose within me on hearing this name pronounced, began to obliterate the impressions I had hitherto held respecting my midnight adventure. Besides, the daylight, the sun, and the little analogy there is between our every-day life and such adventures, made me look upon everything as a dream. The idea of making a deposition had completely vanished, whilst that of investigating it myself alone remained to me; besides, I reproached myself with that sudden fear which I felt had seized me, and I wished to make myself a reparation, which should satisfy me.

"I arrived at Trouville at eleven o'clock in the morning. Every one did honour to me; they

had thought me drowned or assassinated, and were rejoiced that I had escaped with only great fatigue; indeed, I fell down from exhaustion and went to bed, desiring to be called at five o'clock, and that a carriage should be ready to convey me to Pont l'Evêque, where I reckoned upon remaining the night. My wishes were fulfilled to the letter, and I arrived at my destination at eight o'clock. The next morning, at six, I took a post-horse, and, preceded by my guide, I departed on horseback for Dives. On arriving at the town, my intention was to take a walk to the seashore, to follow the coast until I met with the ruins of the Abbaye de Grand Pré, then, merely as an artist to visit by day those places I wished to be well acquainted with, in order to visit them by night. However, an incident occurred which destroyed my plan, but brought me to the same place by a different road.

"On arriving at the postmaster's at Dives, who, by the bye, was also mayor, I found the police at his door, and the whole town in consternation. A new murder had just been committed, but of unparalleled audacity. The Countess de Beuzeval,

who had arrived from Paris only a few days before, had just been assassinated in the park of her own chateau, wherein dwelt the count and two or three of his friends. Do you understand? Pauline —the woman I had loved, the remembrance of whom still lived in my breast—Pauline killed—killed during the night, assassinated in the park of her own castle, whilst I was in the ruins of the adjoining abbey, that is to say, not five hundred steps from her! It was not to be thought of for a moment. But suddenly that apparition, that man, that door, everything returned to my mind. I was going to speak—I was going to tell all, when a presentiment withheld me. I was not yet certain enough, and I resolved before revealing anything, to investigate everything to the bottom.

"The police, who had been made acquainted with it at four o'clock in the morning, had just sought the mayor, the justice of the peace, and two doctors, to make out the depositions. The mayor and the justice of the peace were ready, but one of the doctors, being absent on professional business, could not accompany the others. In learning painting, I had made some anato-

mical studies, so I offered myself as a surgeon, and for want of a better was accepted, so we departed for the Chateau de Burcy. I followed instinctively. I wished to see Pauline before the coffin closed upon her, or rather, I obeyed a voice within me from Heaven.

"We arrived at the chateau. The count had gone away the same morning to Caen—he had left to get permission from the prefect to convey the body to Paris, where the tomb of his family was. He had taken the opportunity to be absent, at the time when justice fulfilled those cold formalities so sorrowful to despair.

"One of his friends received us, and conducted us to the countess's chamber. I could scarcely sustain myself; my legs bent under me, and my heart beat violently. I must have been as pale as the victim which awaited us, as I entered the room. It was still perfumed with the odour of life. I cast around me a wild look. I saw on the bed a human form, concealed by the sheet already thrown over it. Then I felt all my courage evaporate as I leaned against the door. The doctor advanced towards the bed, with that calm, incomprehensible insensibility which comes

from habit, he raised the sheet which covered the corpse, and uncovered the head; then I thought I still dreamed, or that I was under the influence of some fascination. The body laid out on the bed was not that of the Countess de Beuzeval—that murdered woman, whose death we had assembled to prove, *was not Pauline.*"

CHAPTER IV.

"No!—it was not Pauline; it was that of a young and beautiful woman, fair, with blue eyes, and elegant and aristocratic hands.

"The wound was on the right side; the ball had entered between two ribs, and had passed through the heart, so that death had instantly ensued. All this was so strange a mystery, that I began to lose myself. My suspicions knew not where to fix themselves; but one thing was certain, that this lady was not Pauline whom her husband declared to be dead, and under whose name the stranger was to buried.

"I do not know what I was good for during this *post-mortem* examination. I do not know what I signed under the title of '*procès verbal.*' Happily the doctor of Dives, thinking no doubt to establish his superiority over a pupil, and at the same time the pre-eminence of the provinces over Paris, took charge of the whole and only asked for my signature. The usual forms lasted

about two hours; then we descended into the dining-room of the chateau, where some refreshments were laid out for us. Whilst my companions did justice to the ample fare, I leaned my head against a window which looked out on the lawn. I had been there about a quarter of an hour, when a man on horseback entered the court at full gallop, covered with dust. He dismounted without looking if any one was there to take his horse, and came rapidly towards the entrance of the house. I was more surprised than ever. Although I had only caught a glimpse of this man, I had recognized him at once in spite of his change of dress—he was the same I had seen in the midst of the ruins, in blue trousers, with a spade and a hunting-knife. I called one of the servants, and asked who was he who had just entered.

"'He is my master,' said he; 'he has just returned from Caen, where he went to get the authority of transfer.'

"'Does he intend to start for Paris soon?' said I.

"'This evening,' he replied, 'for the hearse which is to convey madame's body to Paris, is ready, and the post-horses are ordered for five o'clock.'

"On leaving the dining-room, we heard the knocks of a hammer; it was the carpenter nailing down the coffin. Everything was done regularly but hastily.

"I started off for Dives; at three o'clock I was at Pont l'Evêque, and at four at Trouville.

"My resolution was taken, for that night at least I was determined to investigate all myself: if my attempts were useless, I would declare everything the next day and leave to the police the task of unravelling the mystery.

"Therefore, the first thing I did on arriving at Trouville, was to hire a new boat, but this time with two men to manage it. Then I went up to my room, and put an excellent pair of double-barrelled pistols in my belt, at which hung also a dagger: I buttoned my coat over all, to disguise these formidable preparations from my hostess. I had a crow-bar and a torch carried down to the boat, and I embarked with my gun across my arm, giving out as the cause of my excursion, my desire to shoot wild ducks and sea-gulls.

"This time again, the wind was favourable; in less than three hours we were at the mouth of the Dive. Arrived there, I ordered my

sailors to lay-to till night. As soon as it was dark enough I steered for the beach and landed.

"Then I gave my last instructions to my men. They were to wait for me behind a rock; each watching by turns, and holding themselves ready to start at my signal. If I did not appear till daylight, they were to return to Trouville and deliver a sealed packet to the mayor. It was my deposition, written and signed; the details of the expedition I was engaged in, and the marks by the aid of which they might find me again either living or dead. Having taken this precaution, I slung my gun at my back. I carried with me my crowbar and my torch, with flint and steel to light it if necessary, and tried to find the road I had taken on my first voyage.

"I was not long in finding it, and as I climbed the mountain, the rays of the moon showed me the ruins of the old abbey. I crossed the porch, and as at first, found myself in the chapel.

"This time again my heart beat almost audibly, but it was more from expectation than fear. I had time to strengthen my resolution,

not on that physical excitement which gives brute and momentary courage, but on that moral reflection, which makes the resolution prudent but irrevocable.

"On reaching the pillar at the foot of which I had slept, I stopped to look around me. All was calm; no noise was heard, unless it were the ceaseless murmur which is the roaring or breathing of the ocean. I resolved to proceed regularly, and to search first of all the place where I had seen the Count de Beuzeval (for I was well convinced that it was he) conceal an object I could not distinguish.

"Therefore, I left the crowbar and the torch against the pillar, and charged my gun so as to be ready in case of an alarm. I gained the corridor and followed its dark arches; leaning against one of the columns which supported them was the spade. I took possession of it; then after a moment of silence which convinced me that I was alone, I risked gaining the hiding-place, I raised the grave-stone as the count had done. I saw the freshly disturbed earth; I laid down my gun; I plunged in my spade, and in the first spadeful of earth I saw a key shining. I filled up the hole, replaced the stone, took up

my gun, put the spade where I found it, and stopped for a moment in the darkest corner to collect my scattered ideas.

"It was evident that the key opened the door by which I had seen the count pass; therefore I should not need the crowbar, so I left it behind the pillar, and only taking the torch I advanced towards the vaulted door, descended the three steps, and put the key into the lock. At the second turn the bolt flew back; I entered and was just going to close it after me, when I thought some accident might prevent me from opening it again with the key, so I went back for the crowbar, and hid it in the darkest corner between the fourth and fifth steps. I shut the door after me, and finding myself in utter darkness, I lighted my torch and the subterraneous passage was no longer in gloom.

"This passage resembled the entrance of a cave; it was only six feet wide, the walls and vault were of stone, and before me was a staircase of about twenty steps. At the bottom of the staircase I found myself on a declivity, which seemed to go down into the earth. Some paces before me I saw a second door; I approached it, and listened with my ear against its oak

panels, but still I heard nothing. I tried the key, it opened it just the same as the other. I entered as I did the first, but without shutting it after me. I found myself in the vaults reserved for the superiors of the abbey, the monks being interred in the cemetery.

"There I stopped a moment. It was evident that I was near the end of my search, but my resolution was too firm for anything to change it; and therefore," continued Alfred, "you will easily understand that the impression of the place was not without its influence. I passed my hand across my forehead, which was covered with perspiration, and stopped a moment to consider.

"What was I going to find? Doubtless some funeral stone sealed three days ago. Suddenly I trembled. I thought I heard a groan.

"Instead of diminishing my courage this noise only served to strengthen it. I advanced rapidly. Whence came this groan? Whilst I was looking round me, I heard another cry. I rushed to the side whence it came looking into every vault, but seeing nothing except grave-stones, their inscriptions indicating the names of those sleeping underneath them. At last, on arriving at the

deepest and the farthest off, I perceived a young woman sitting in a corner with her eyes shut iting a piece of her hair; near her on a stone as a letter, an extinguished lamp, and an empty lass.

"Had I arrived too late? Was she dead? I tried the key; it was not made for the lock, but she opened her haggard eyes at the noise I made; convulsively put back the hair which covered her face, and with a mechanical and rapid movement stood up like a shadow. I shrieked out 'Pauline.'

"'Oh!' cried she, in a tone of the most fearful agony, and falling on her knees, 'take me away from here; I have seen nothing; I will tell nothing. I swear it by my mother.'

"'Pauline! Pauline!' I repeated, taking hold of her hands through the grating, 'Pauline, you have nothing to fear; I come to save you; I come to save you.'

"'Oh!' said she, rising up, 'save me! save me!—yes, save me! Open that door—open it this instant! Unless it is open, I will believe nothing you tell me. In the name of God, open the door.' And she shook the grating with a force I could not have believed a woman capable of doing.

"'Wait one instant!' cried I; 'I have not got the key of this door, but I have the means of opening it. I will go at once and get it.'

"'Oh, do not leave me!' cried she, seizing my arm through the grating with the strength of a maniac. 'Do not leave me, I implore you; I shall never see you again!'

"'Pauline,' said I, bringing the torch near my face, 'do you not recognize me? Oh! look at me, and think if it be possible for me to abandon you.'

"Pauline fixed her large black eyes on mine, thought for an instant, and then suddenly cried out, 'Alfred de Nerval.'

"'Oh! thank you, thank you,' said I. 'You have not forgotten me. Yes, it is I who have loved so much, and who love you still. See if you cannot confide in me now?'

"A sudden blush passed across her pale countenance, so much is modesty inherent in the heart of woman. Then she let go my arm:

"'Will you be long,' said she.

"'Five minutes,' said I.

"'Go then, but leave me this torch, I beg of you; the darkness will kill me.'

"I gave her the torch. She took it, and

passed her arm through the grating, resting her face between two bars, in order to follow me as long as possible with her eyes. I hastened to return the way I had come. When I had opened the first door, I turned and saw Pauline in the same posture, immovable as a statue, with the torch in her marble arm.

"Twenty paces farther on, I found the second staircase, and at the fourth step the crowbar I had hidden; then I returned immediately. Pauline was still in the same place. On seeing me, she gave a cry of joy. I rushed towards the grating.

"The lock was so solid, that I was obliged to turn to the side of the hinges. I therefore began to work upon the stone. Pauline lighted me. In ten minutes the two fastenings of one of the gates became loose. I pulled, and it opened. Pauline fell on her knees. She had not believed till that moment that she could be restored to the world.

"I left her for an instant to her meditations, and afterwards I entered the vault. Then she turned quickly, seized the open letter on the stone, and hid it in her bosom. This act called to my mind the empty glass; and as I took it

up with anxiety, about half an inch of a white-looking liquid remained at the bottom.

"What was there in this glass?' I asked.

"'Poison,' replied Pauline.

"'And have you drunk it?' I almost shrieked.

"'How did I know that you were coming?' answered Pauline, leaning against the grating; for only then did she remember that she had emptied the glass, only an hour and a half before my arrival.

"'Do you suffer?' said I.

"'Not yet,' replied she.

Then there was still hope.

"'How long had the poison been in this glass?'

"'About two days and two nights, for I have not been able to calculate the time.'

"I looked in the glass again, and what remained reassured me a little. During those two days and two nights, the poison had had time to get to the bottom of the glass. Pauline had only drunk water, poisoned it is true, but perhaps not of sufficient strength to produce death.

"'There is not a moment to lose,' said I, taking her under one of my arms. 'We must fly to seek assistance.'

" 'I shall be able to walk,' said Pauline, disengaging herself from my arm, with that modesty which had already made her blush.

" We set out immediately towards the first door, which we shut after us. Then we arrived at the second, which opened without difficulty, and we found ourselves in the cloister again. The moon was shining in the midst of a clear sky. Pauline extended her arm, and fell a second time on her knees.

" 'Let us go — let us go,' said I: 'every minute is perhaps fatal.'

" 'I begin to suffer,' said she, getting up.

" A cold perspiration came on my forehead, and I took her in my arms like a little child, and crossing the ruins, I left the cloister and ran down the mountain. On arriving at the shore, I saw the lighted fire of my two men.

" 'To the sea! to the sea!' cried I, in a voice which showed there was no time to be lost.

They rushed to the boat, and brought it as near to the shore as possible. I went into the water up to my knees. They took Pauline from my arms, and placed her in the boat, whilst I jumped in after her.

" 'Do you suffer still?'

"'Yes;' said Pauline.

"What I felt then was something very like despair; no help, no antidote. Suddenly I bethought me of salt-water. I filled a shell I found in the bottom of the boat with it, and gave it to Pauline.

"'Drink it,' said I.

She obeyed mechanically.

"'What are you doing,' cried one of the fishermen, 'you will make that lady sick.'

"That was all I wanted, an emetic alone would save her. In five minutes she began to feel contractions of the stomach; the more severely, as she had not eaten anything for the last three days. But after this paroxysm had passed, she felt relieved; then I gave her a glass of clear fresh water, which she drank with avidity. Her suffering soon ceased, and yielded perhaps to great fatigue. We made a bed for her of our clothes at the stern of the boat. She lay down upon it, obeying like a child; almost immediately she fell asleep, forgetful of the horrid character of her husband. I listened awhile at her breathing: it was quick, but regular. She was saved!

"'Now, then,' said I cheerfully to my sailors; 'Now for Trouville, and that as soon as possible; I will give you twenty-five Louis on my arrival.'

"My boatmen, thinking the sail was not enough, took to their oars, and the boat went along like a sea-bird."

CHAPTER V.

"PAULINE opened her eyes on entering the harbour. Her first movement was that of terror. She thought she had had a consoling dream, and she put out her arms, as if to assure herself that they did not touch the walls of the vault; then she looked round her with disquietude.

"'Where are you taking me?' said she.

"'Calm yourself,' replied I. 'These houses you see before you, belong to a poor village. Those who dwell in them are too busy to be curious, and you can remain unknown here as long as you like. Besides, if you wish to go away, only tell me where, and I am ready to accompany you, to-morrow, to-night, this moment, I am your guide—even out of France—anywhere.'

"'Thank you,' said she; 'leave me an hour to think over it. I will try to collect my ideas; but for the moment both my head and my heart are broken; all my strength has been consumed

during the last two days and nights, and I feel in my brain a confusion which resembles madness.'

"'Well, I am your friend. When you wish to see me, you will have me called.' She made a gesture of thanks. Just then we arrived at the hotel.

"I ordered a chamber to be prepared for her in a part of the house completely separated from mine, so as not to wound Pauline's susceptibility. Then I persuaded our hostess to send her up some soup only, as any other nourishment might be injurious to the stomach in its present state of irritability and weakness. Having given these orders, I retired to my chamber.

"There I could give full vent to the feeling of joy which filled my soul, and which I dared not let loose before Pauline. Her whom I still loved, the remembrance of whom still lived in my breast, notwithstanding a separation of nearly two years—I had saved her! She owed her life to me. I was overwhelmed at the truth that Providence, by different combinations had brought about the result of my success. Then suddenly a shudder passed through my veins on thinking, that if circumstances had not happened as they did, and if any one of those little events

(the chain of which conducted me into this labyrinth) had not taken place as it did, Pauline might at that moment have been wringing her hands in convulsions, caused by poison or hunger; whilst I, I in my ignorance, occupied elsewhere with some trifling affair, perhaps with some pleasure, might have left her thus in agony, without a breath, without a presentiment, without a voice saying to me, 'She is dying; save her.'

"These things were dreadful to think about, but the fear of reflection is the most terrible. It is true that it is also the most consoling, for after having cleared away doubts, it brings us back to the truth, which proclaims the omnipresence of God.

"I remained in this state for an hour, and I swear to you," continued Alfred, "that no thought that was not pure entered into my heart or imagination. I was happy—I was proud to have saved her, and this action carried its reward with it. I asked nothing more than the happiness even of having been chosen to accomplish it."

"At the end of the hour I was called. I rose quickly, and went to her chamber, but at the door my strength forsook me. I was obliged to rest against the door for a short time, so that the

servant had to return and ask me to come in, and I was forced to conquer my feelings.

"She had thrown herself on the bed without undressing. I approached her as calmly as possible, and she held out her hand to me."

"'I have not yet thanked you,' said she; 'my excuse is the impossibility of finding words to express my gratitude. Excuse the terror of a woman in the position in which you found me, and pardon me.'

"'Listen to me, madam,' said I, trying to repress my emotion, 'and believe what I am about to say to you. There are some situations so unexpected, so strange, that they dispense with all ordinary forms, all pre-arranged plans. God led me to you, and I thank Him for it; but my mission is not yet accomplished. I hope it, and perhaps you will yet have need of me. Now listen, and weigh well every word I utter.

"'I am free—I am rich. Nothing detains me on one part of the earth more than another. I intended to travel, and was on the point of starting for England, for no particular object. I can therefore change my journey, and go to any part of this world to which it would please chance to send me. Perhaps you ought to quit France? I

do not know. I do not wish to learn any of your secrets, and I will wait till you give me a sign before I even form a supposition of them. But, should you remain in France or leave it, dispose of me, madam, as a friend or as a brother. Ask me to accompany you, far or near. Make me either an avowed protector, or exact from me that I should not appear to know you, and I will obey instantly, without ever thinking of it afterwards—without a selfish hope or wrong intention. Now, as I have spoken, forget your age and mine, and suppose that I am your brother.'

"'Thanks,' said the countess, in a voice of deep emotion. 'I accept with a confidence, equal to your own devotion. I confide everything to your honour, for I have only you in this world. You alone are aware that I live.'

"'Yes,' she continued, 'you thought correctly; I must leave France. You would have gone to England. Take me there; but as I cannot arrive in England without some name, or family connection, and as you have offered me the title of your sister, so henceforth I shall be Miss de Nerval to every one.'

"'Oh, how happy I am!' said I.

"The countess made me a sign to listen, saying, 'I also have been rich, but the dead possess nothing.'

"'But, I am! My whole fortune——'

"'You do not understand me,' said she, 'and in not allowing me to finish, you make me blush.'

"'Oh! I beg your pardon.'

"'I will be Miss de Nerval, a daughter of your father, if you like; an orphan who has been confided to your care. You ought to have letters of introduction then. You can introduce me as governess into some school. I speak English and Italian like my mother tongue; I am also a good musician, at least I used to be told so. I will give lessons in music and languages.'

"'Oh, that is impossible!'

"'Those are my conditions,' said the countess; 'do you refuse them, monsieur? Or do you accept them, my brother?'

"'Anything you like—everything!'

"'Very well; then there is no time to lose; we must start to-morrow. Can we do so?'

"'Certainly.'

"'But a passport?'

"'I have mine.'

"'In the name of Mons. de Nerval?'

"'I will add—and of his sister.'

"'Will you write an untruth?'

"'A very innocent one. Would you rather I wrote to Paris for a second passport?'

"'No, no; that would cause too great a loss of time. Where do we start from?'

"'From Havre. By the steamer, if you wish, and whenever you please.'

"'Can we start immediately?'

"'Are you not too weak?'

"'You are mistaken, I am now quite strong.'

"'Whenever you feel disposed to leave this place, you will find me ready.'

"'In two hours then. Adieu, brother.'

"'Adieu, madam.'

"'Ah,' said the countess, smiling. 'You have broken our agreement already.'

"'Allow me time to accustom myself to that sweet name.'

"'Has it cost me so much then?'

"'Oh, you!' cried I. I saw that I was going to say too much. 'In two hours everything will be prepared as you wish.' Then I bowed, and left the room.

"Only a quarter of an hour ago I had, in the

sincerity of my heart, offered to play the part of brother, and already I felt all its difficulties. To be the adopted brother of a young and beautiful woman, is a thing difficult enough. But when a man has loved a woman; when he has lost her and found her again, alone and isolated, having no support but himself; when the happiness which he had not once dared to believe in, and which he looked upon as a dream, is near him in reality, and may be seized on stretching out the hand; then, in spite of the resolution taken, in spite of the pledged word, it is impossible entirely to shut up in his heart the fire which consumes it; some spark from it always escapes, either through his eyes or by his mouth.

"I went in search of my boatmen, and found them eating and drinking. I imparted to them my project of reaching Havre during the night, so as to be in time for the morning steamer; they refused to cross in the boat which brought us here; but as they only required an hour to get ready a larger one, we agreed directly as to the price, or rather they left it to my generosity. I added five more louis to what they had already received, and for that sum they would have taken me to America.

"I paid a visit to the wardrobe of my good hostess. The countess was saved in the dress she wore when she was shut up, and that was all she had. I feared, weak and suffering as she still was, that the wind and the night air might be injurious to her; but I saw on the principal shelf a Scotch tartan shawl, and taking possession of it, begged my landlady to put it in my bill. Thanks to this shawl and my cloak, I hoped that my companion would not be the worse of the voyage. She would not have long to wait, and when she knew the boatmen were ready she went down immediately. I had taken advantage of the intervening time to settle my account at the inn, so we had nothing to do but embark.

"As I had foreseen, the night was cold, but calm and clear. I wrapped the countess up in her tartan, and wished her to enter the tent which our boatmen had made up in the stern with a sail; but the clearness of the sky and the stillness of the sea detained her on deck. I placed her on a seat, and we sat down close to each other.

"We were both of us so full of thought, that we remained for some time without speaking a word. I had let my head fall on my breast, and

thought with wonder over the strange adventures which had just commenced, the chain of which probably extended into the future. I burned to know how it was, that the Countess de Beuzeval, young, rich, and apparently loved by her husband, should have been left to await in the vault of a ruined abbey, that death from which I had snatched her. For what end had her husband spread abroad the rumour of her death, and exposed upon the deathbed, a stranger in her place?

"Was it jealousy? This was the first idea which entered my mind—it was frightful. Pauline loved some one. Oh, then, that is what disenchanted all my dreams, as for this man she loved she would doubtless return to life again. Then I should have saved her for another. She would thank me as a brother, and then all would be said and done. This man would shake me by the hand, repeating that he owed me more than life; then they would be happy, with a happiness all the more certain, because he would be ignorant of all.

"And I!—I would return to France to suffer as I had already suffered, and a thousand times more; for this happiness which before I had

only seen afar off, had approached me, only to escape still more cruelly. Then would come the moment perhaps, when I would curse the day I had saved that woman,—when I would regret, that dead to all the world, she was living, through me far from me; and for another near to him. Besides, if she were to blame the count's vengeance was just. In his place I would not have left her to die; but Pauline loving another!—Pauline guilty!—Oh! this thought tore my heart.

"I slowly raised my head, Pauline was looking at the sky with her head thrown back, and I saw two tears running down her cheeks.

"'Oh! good God, what is the matter with you?' I exclaimed.

"'Do you think,' said she, still remaining immovable;—'Do you think that any one could leave her country, her family, her mother, without a broken heart? Do you think one can pass from happiness—at least from tranquillity—to despair, without the heart bleeding? Do you think that one can cross the sea at my age, to drag out the rest of her life in a strange land, without dropping a tear on those waves which take her away from all that she has loved?'

"'But,' said I, 'is it an eternal adieu?'

"'Eternal!' murmured she, sweetly bowing her head.

"'Will you never again see those persons you regret?'

"'Never.'

"'And must the whole world never know, that she who was thought dead, and who will be so much regretted, is still living and weeps? Without any exception?'

"'The whole world!—never—without exception.'

"'Oh,' said I, 'what a weight you have taken from my heart.'

"'I don't understand you,' said Pauline.

"'Can you not guess what awakes within me such doubts and fears? Have you no desire to know by what string of circumstances I came near you? And do you thank Heaven for having saved you, without knowing by what means you were saved?'

"'You are right; a brother ought not to have any secrets from his sister. You will tell me everything and I in my turn will hide nothing from you.'

"'Nothing! Oh, swear it. Will you let me read your heart like an open book?'

"'Yes, and you will only find in it misfortune, resignation, and prayer. But this is neither the hour nor the place. Besides, it is too soon after the events which have happened to me, to have the courage to relate them.'

"'Oh, whenever you like; take your own time, I will wait.'

"'I am in need of repose said she, rising. Did you not say I might sleep under this tent?'

"I conducted her to it, and having laid my cloak on the plank, she made a sign to me to leave her. I obeyed, and returned to the place on the deck she had left. I laid my head where she had laid hers, and remained in that position till we arrived at Havre.

"The next evening we landed at Brighton; six hours afterwards we were in London."

CHAPTER VI.

"My first care on arriving in London was to look out for a lodging for my sister and myself. Consequently, I repaired the same day to the merchant on whom I had a letter of credit. He told me of a little house large enough for two persons, and two servants. I requested him to take it, and the next day he wrote to tell me that the cottage was at my disposal.

"I went immediately, and whilst the countess was asleep, to a linendraper. The mistress of the establishment made me up a very simple, but perfectly complete trousseau; in two hours it was marked with the name Pauline de Nerval, and carried to her wardrobe in the bedroom of the cottage. I then entered a milliner's shop, who, although French, made the same haste as the linendraper. As I could not give the proper measure for the dresses, I bought several of the prettiest stuffs I could find, and begged the shopkeeper to send me a dressmaker the same evening.

"I got back to the hotel at noon, when I was told my sister was awake, and waited for me. I found her dressed in a very simple dress which she had had made at Havre. She looked charming.

"'Look at me,' said see, on seeing me enter; 'am I not now dressed suitably for my employment, will you hesitate now to introduce me as under-governess?'

"'I will do everything you wish,' I replied.

"'Oh, but you ought not to speak to me thus: if I play my part, it strikes me you forget yours; brothers do not in general submit so blindly to their sister's wishes, and especially elder brothers. Take care, you will betray yourself.'

"'I truly admire your courage,' said I, letting my arms fall and looking at her. 'Grief in the heart—for you suffer from the soul. Pallor on the cheek—for you suffer from the body. Far away, for ever you say, from all that you have loved, and yet you have strength to smile. Weep, now weep, I like it much better and it does not pain me so much.'

"'Yes, you are right,' said she; 'and I am a bad actress. My tears are seen through my smile. Is it not so? But I have wept when you

were not here, and it has done me good, so that, to an eye less penetrating, to a brother less attentive, I might appear to have fogotten everything already.'

"'Oh, rest assured, madam,' said I, with some bitterness, for all my former suspicions returned. 'Rest assured I will never believe it.'

"'Do you think one can forget her mother, when one knows she thinks you dead, and weeps over your death? Oh, mother! my poor mother' cried the countess, bursting into tears and falling on the sofa.

"'You see what an egotist I am,' said I, approaching her; 'I prefer your tears to your smiles. Tears are confiding, and smiles are dissimulating. The smile is the veil under which the heart hides itself, to deceive. Then when you weep, it seems to me that you want me to dry your tears. When you weep, I have hope that by care, attention, and respect, I may console you. Whereas, if you were consoled already, what hope would there be left to me?'

"'Look here, Alfred,' said the countess, with a feeling of love, and calling me by my name for the first time; 'we will not war with words. Strange things have passed between us. You

came to me by accident, and I came to you by a vile stratagem. Be frank, then—question me. What do you want to know? I will reply.'

"'Oh, you are an angel,' cried I, 'and I am an ass. I have no right to know anything—to ask anything. Have I not been as happy as man can be—when I found you in that vault, when I carried you in my arms down the mountain, when you rested on my shoulder in the boat? I do not know, but I wish that constant danger threatened you, to feel you always shivering against my heart. Many a one would exchange a long life for a year of such bliss. Then, you were all fear and I was your only hope. Your remembrances of Paris did not torment you—you did not feign to smile to hide your tears. I was happy—I was not jealous.'

"'Alfred,' said the countess to me gravely, 'you have done enough for me, so I must do something for you. Besides, you must suffer, and very much, too, to speak to me thus; for you prove that you no longer remember that I am your sole dependence. You make me ashamed of myself, and you make yourself unhappy.'

"'Oh, pardon me, pardon me!' cried I, falling at her feet; 'but you know that I have loved you

as a young girl, although I have never said it; you know that the want of fortune alone prevented my aspiring to your hand; and you know, that since I have found you again, this love, asleep perhaps, but never extinguished, is aroused again more ardent than ever. You know it, for there is no need to speak these things. Well, that is what makes me suffer equally to see you smile or weep. When you smile, you hide something from me; and when you weep, you avow all. Ah! you love—you regret some one.'

"'You are mistaken,' said the countess; 'if I have loved, I love no longer; if I regret any one, it is my mother.'

"'Oh! Pauline, Pauline, do you tell me the truth—do you not deceive me?'

"'Do you think I would be capable of buying your protection with a lie? Oh, Heaven protect me!'

"'But what was the cause of your husband's jealousy? for jealousy alone could have induced him to commit such a crime.'

"'Listen, Alfred. I must confess a terrible secret to you—you have a right to hear it. This evening you will know it—this evening you will read my heart—this evening you can dispose of

more than my life, for you will be made the trustee of my honour, and that of my family, but on one condition——'

"'What is it? Name it—I accept it beforehand!'

"'That you never speak to me again of love. I promise you I will not forget that you love me.' She held out her hand to me, and I kissed it with a respect bordering on religion. 'Sit down there,' said she, 'and say no more about it till this evening. What have you done?'

"'I have found a very plain, quiet, little house, where you will be free, and the mistress; for you cannot remain at an hotel.'

"'And you have found it?'

"'Yes—in Brompton; and if you like, we will go and see it after breakfast.'

"'Very well. Pass your cup.'

"We took tea, and engaged a cab which put us down at the cottage.

"It was a pretty little building, with green lattice-work about it, and a garden full of flowers. A regular English house of only two stories. The ground-floor was to be for both of us, the first-floor was prepared for Pauline, and I had reserved the second for myself.

"We went up to her apartments; they were composed of sitting-room, bedroom, boudoir, and a library, in which were music and drawing materials. I opened the wardrobe, and found the linendraper had kept her word.

"'What is that?' asked Pauline.

"'If you join a school,' said I, 'you will require a trousseau. This is marked with your name—a P and an N—Pauline de Nerval.'

"'Thank you, brother,' said she, pressing my hand. It was the first time she had given me this title since our explanation; but now it did not pain me.

"We entered her bedroom. On the bed were two Parisian bonnets, and a plain Cashmere shawl.

"'Alfred,' said the countess, 'you ought to have let me come here alone—I ought to have found these things. Do you not see that I am ashamed of having given you so much trouble? Then I do not know whether it is right.'

"'Oh, you can repay me with your earnings,' said I, smiling. 'Surely a brother may lend to a sister!'

"'He may even give to a sister when he is richer than she is,' said Pauline, 'for in this case he who gives is happy.'

"'You are right; no delicacy of the heart escapes you. Thanks, thanks!'

"We passed on into the sitting-room; on the piano were the most popular pieces of Bellini, Meyerbeer, and Rossini. Pauline opened a portfolio of music, and fell into a deep reverie.

"'What is the matter?' said I, seeing her eyes fixed on the same page, and that she seemed to have forgotten I was there.

"'Strange thing!' murmured she, replying at once to her own thought and my question; 'only a week ago I sang this same piece at the countess of M—'s. Then I had a family name, and an existence. A week has passed, and I no longer have any of them.'

"She turned pale, and fell rather than seated herself in an armchair, and one might have thought she was really going to die. I approached her as she closed her eyes, and I understood that she was completely wrapped up in thought; so, seating myself near her, I rested her head on my shoulder, and said, 'Poor sister!'

"She began to weep, but this time without sobs or convulsions,—they were melancholy and silent tears. In a minute she opened her eyes with a smile.

"'Thank you,' said she, 'for having allowed me to weep.'

"'I am no longer jealous,' said I.

"She arose. 'Is there not a second story?' said she.

"'Yes, it is just like this.'

"'And is it to be occupied?'

"'You must decide that.'

"'We must accept the position destiny has imposed upon us with good-will. In the eyes of the world you are my brother; it is proper that you should dwell in the house in which I dwell. It would, no doubt, be thought strange if you lived elsewhere. This apartment will be yours. Let us go into the garden.'

"There was a green lawn with a basket of flowers. We walked round it on the gravel-walks two or three times, then Pauline went to the thicket and gathered a bouquet.

"'Look at these roses,' said she, returning to me; 'how pale and scentless they are; they seem to be exiles longing for their own country. Do you believe that they have an idea what the country is, and that they feel their sufferings?'

"'You are mistaken,' said I. 'These flowers grow here; this is the air and atmosphere that

is good for them; they are the daughters of fog, and not of dew; a warmer sun would burn them. Besides, they are intended to adorn light hair, and to harmonize with the forced complexion of the ladies of the North. Your black hair would require the dark roses of Spain. We will go there and gather some whenever you like.'

"Pauline smiled sadly. 'Yes,' said she, 'to Spain, Switzerland, Italy, — anywhere except France.' Then she continued her walk without again speaking, plucking off the flowers mechanically.

"'But,' began I, 'have you given up all hope of returning there?'

"'Am I not dead?'

"'But under an assumed name?'

"'I must also change my countenance.'

"'Is this secret so terrible?'

"'It is a medal with two faces, bearing on one side poison, and on the other a scaffold. Listen; I will relate all that: you ought to know it, and as soon as possible. But, first, tell me what miracle of Providence led you to me?'

"We sat down on a seat under a magnificent plantain, which covered part of the garden with its branches.

"Then I began my recital from my arrival at Trouville. I related everything; how I was overtaken by a storm, and wrecked on the coast; how, that on seeking a shelter, I had entered the ruined abbey; how, that on being awakened from my sleep by the noise of a door, I had seen a man come out of the subterraneous passage; how this man had buried something under a tomb; and why, from that time, I suspected some mystery which I resolved to investigate. Then I told her of my journey to Dives, the fatal news I there learnt, my despairing resolution to see her once more, my astonishment and joy at seeing another body instead of hers; and, lastly, my nocturnal expedition, the key under the tomb, my entry into the subterraneous passage, and my happiness and joy on finding her. I related everything to her with all that warmth of tenderness which expressed love without revealing it. And whilst I was reciting all to her, I was happy and rewarded, for I saw that this passionate recital and my emotion sank deep into her heart. When I had finished, she took my hand and pressed it between her own without speaking, looking at me with an expression of angelic gratitude, then breaking the silence, she said,—

"'Will you take an oath?'

"'Tell me what you mean.'

"'Swear to me, by all you hold sacred, that you will never reveal to any one in this world what I am now about to confide to you, until my mother, the count, and myself are dead.'

"'I swear it, on my honour.'

"'Then, listen,' said she, 'patiently.'

CHAPTER VII.

"'I HAVE no need to tell you who my family were, it only consisted of my mother and some distant relations. I had some fortune.'

"'Alas!' interrupted I, 'I wish to heaven you had been poor.'

"'My father,' continued Pauline, without appearing to notice the feeling which caused me to utter the exclamation; 'my father left at his death about forty thousand livres of income. As I was an only daughter, it was quite a fortune. I was introduced then into the world with the reputation of being a rich heiress.'

"'You forget,' said I, 'also, that of great beauty joined to a first-rate education.'

"'Now, how can I go on if you keep interrupting me,' said Pauline, smiling.

"'Because you cannot tell, as I can, the effect you produced in the world. It is a part of your history I know more of than you do yourself, for

without knowing it, you were queen of all the *fêtes*. The first time I saw you was at the Princess de Bel—'s. Every one of talent and celebrity was to be found in the *salons* of this beautiful Milanese exile. They sang. I heard them speak of you and pronounce your name. Why did my heart beat on hearing it for the first time? The princess rose and led you like a victim to that altar of melody. Tell me, why on seeing you so confused, I had a feeling of trepidation in my heart as if you had been my sister—I, who had only seen you for a quarter of an hour. Oh! I trembled more than you did perhaps, and little did you think that in all that crowd there was one heart that was brother to yours, that beat with your fears, and would be enraptured with your triumph. Your mouth smiled; the first sounds of your voice trembling and uncertain were heard. Soon the notes came out pure and thrilling. Your eyes ceased to look on the earth, you raised them to heaven. The crowd which surrounded you had disappeared, and I doubt whether their applause reached you, your spirit seemed to soar so much higher than theirs. It was one of Bellini's airs. Melodious and simple, nevertheless full of tears,

such as he alone knew how to make. I did not applaud you; I wept. You were led back to your place in the midst of congratulations, and I alone dared not approach you. But I placed myself in a position that I could always see you. The *soirée* went on as usual, music continuing to spread its harmonious wings over its delighted audience; still I heard nothing more. My thoughts were concentrated on one object. I looked at you. Do you remember that evening?"

"Yes; I think so," said Pauline.

"Since then," said I, without thinking I interrupted her narrative; "since then I have heard that air once more, not the same air, but the popular song that sprang from it. It was in Sicily, on one of those evenings which God has only ordained for Italy and Greece. The sun was sinking behind the Girgenti, the old Agrigente; I was sitting on the side of the road. On my left was that plain covered with ruins, in the midst of which three temples alone remained standing, which began to grow dim in the shade. Beyond this plain was the sea, calm as a mirror of silver. On my right was the town, standing out conspicuously from a golden background. Before me was a young girl returning from a

well, with one of those long, ancient pitchers of elegant shape. She passed by, singing the song I have mentioned. Oh! if you knew what an impression it made upon me then. I closed my eyes, and laid my head on my hands. Sea, city, temples, everything disappeared, until this girl came like a fairy to take me back three years, and to transport me to the Princess Bel—'s drawing-room. There I saw you again, heard again the sound of your voice, as I looked at you with ecstasy. Then a deep grief seized my heart, for you were no longer the young girl I had loved so much, and who was called Pauline de Meulien. You were the Countess Horace de Beuzeval, alas!"

"Oh, yes! Alas! alas!" murmured Pauline.

We both of us sat for some moments without speaking. Pauline spoke first.

"Yes; those were happy times, the happiest of my life," continued she. "Ah! young girls do not know when they are happy. They know not that destiny durst not touch the chaste veil which envelopes them, but which a husband tears away. In the summer, we went to our château, Meulien; in the winter we returned to Paris. The summer was passed in the midst of picnic

parties, and the winter was hardly long enough for the pleasures of town. I thought that so pure and serene a life could never be clouded. I continued to go on happy and confiding, and thus we arrived at the autumn of 1830.

"We had a country neighbour, Madame de Lucienne, whose husband was a great friend of my father. One evening she invited my mother and me to pass the next day at their country-house. Her husband, her son, and some young Parisians were assembled to hunt the wild boar, and a grand dinner was to celebrate the victory of the modern Meleagre. We accepted her invitation.

"When we arrived, the hunters had already started; but as the park was enclosed with walls, it was easy for us to join them. Besides, from time to time we could hear the sound of the bugle, so that on riding towards them, we enjoyed all the pleasures of the chase without the fatigue. Monsieur de Lucienne had remained to accompany his wife, his daughter, my mother, and myself. His son Paul directed the hunt.

"At noon, the sound of the bugle came much nearer, and we heard the same air played often.

Monsieur de Lucienne told us it meant that they had caught sight of the boar, which began to tire, and that it was time to mount our horses. Just at this moment a hunter arrived at full gallop with a message from Paul, that the boar could no longer resist the dogs. Monsieur de Lucienne took a rifle that hung at his saddle-bow, then we all three mounted and rode off, the two mothers walking to a pavilion where they could see the sport

"We lost no time in joining the chase, and whatever repugnance I felt at first to take part in this event, it was soon dispelled by the excitement, the noise of the bugle, the shouts of the huntsmen, and the barking of the dogs; and Lucy and I set off at a gallop, half laughing and half trembling. We saw the boar cross the path two or three times, and each time with the dogs nearer to him. At last he came against an old oak-tree, and turning round, held the pack at bay. It was in a glade of the woods on which the windows of the pavilion looked, so that our mothers could see the sport easily.

"The hunters were placed in circle, at about fifty paces from the combat. The dogs, excited by a long chase, had all thrown themselves upon

the boar, which had nearly disappeared under the speckled and moving mass. From time to time one of the assailants was thrown up eight or ten feet into the air, and fell to the ground howling and bleeding; then he would in turn become the assailant, rush amongst the pack, and, wounded as he was, again turn upon his enemies. This struggle had scarcely lasted a quarter of an hour, yet ten or twelve dogs were mortally wounded.

"This bloody and cruel spectacle was a punishment to me, and I saw it had the same effect upon the others; for I heard Madame de Lucienne cry out, 'Enough! enough! I beg of you, Paul.' Paul immediately dismounted, and armed with his rifle advanced several steps on foot towards the boar; he took aim in the midst of the dogs, and fired.

"At the same instant, for this took place as quick as lightning, the pack opened, and the wounded boar passed between them; but before Madame de Lucienne herself could call out, it rushed on Paul, who was knocked down, and the furious animal instead of following its course, stopped enraged at its new enemy.

"Then there was a terrible silence. Madame

de Lucienne, pale as death, her arms extended towards her son, murmured in a scarcely articulate voice, 'Save him! save him!' Monsieur de Lucienne, who alone was armed, wished to aim at the animal; but Paul was underneath, and the slightest deviation of the ball might kill his son. A convulsive trembling seized him; he saw his incapability, and letting fall his rifle, rushed towards Paul, calling, 'To the rescue! to the rescue!' The hunters followed him. He had hardly spoken when a young man jumped from his horse, seized the gun, and cried with a firm and powerful voice, 'Out of the way, there!' The hunters stepped aside to make way for the messenger of death, which would arrive amongst them. What I have just related took place in less than a minute.

"Every eye was fixed on this young man, and on the terrible aim he was about to take; whilst he was firm and calm. The barrel of the rifle was slowly raised from the ground until it arrived at a certain height; then the hunter and gun became as motionless as if they were of stone. He fired, and the boar, mortally wounded, rolled three or four paces from Paul, who raised himself on one knee, his hunting-knife in his hand. But it was unnecessary, the ball had been

guided by too sure an aim not to have proved fatal. Madame de Lucienne gave a shriek and fainted. Lucy sank down on her horse, and would have fallen, had not one of the prickers supported her. I dismounted, and ran towards Madame de Lucienne. The huntsmen were all collected round Paul and the dead boar, with the exception of the young gentleman, who, as soon as he had fired, quietly rested his rifle against the trunk of a tree.

"Madame de Lucienne soon revived in the arms of her husband and son. Paul had only a slight wound on the hip, so rapidly had everything taken place. After the first burst of emotion, Madame de Lucienne looked around her. She had all her maternal gratitude to express to a man, and she immediately sought the hunter who had saved her son; but Monsieur de Lucienne, guessing her intention, brought him to her. Madame de Lucienne seized his hand, and wished to thank him; but she burst into tears, and could only pronounce these words, 'Oh! Monsieur de Beuzeval!'

"It was he, then!" cried I.

"Yes, it was he. I saw him then for the first time, encircled by the gratitude of a whole family, and the prestige of emotion this scene, of which

the hero, had caused me. He was a pale young man, short rather than tall, with black eyes and light hair. At first sight he appeared to be scarcely twenty years of age, but on looking more closely, several slight lines might be seen beginning from the corner of the eye, and enlarging over the temples, while an almost imperceptible wrinkle crossed his forehead, showing him to be a deep-reflecting man; pale, thin lips, beautiful teeth, and hands small as a woman's, completed his *tout-ensemble,* which at first inspired me with a feeling of repulsion rather than sympathy. His face seemed cold and indifferent amidst the general exultation, and a mother's thanks for having saved her son.

"The hunt was over, and we returned to the château. On entering the drawing-room Count Horace de Beuzeval excused himself from remaining longer, as he had an engagement for a dinner in Paris. Some one observed that there were fifteen leagues to go, and hardly four hours to do it. The count, smiling, replied that his horse was accustomed to perform such long journeys; and then he ordered his servant to bring him round.

"This servant was a Malay, whom Count

Horace had brought back with him from India, where he had gone to receive a considerable inheritance. He still wore his native costume, and although he had been nearly three years in France, he could only speak his own language, of which Count Horace knew some words. He obeyed with marvellous alacrity, and we could soon see through the drawing-room windows, the horses prancing about; their breed, all the gentlemen praised. They were, as well as I could judge, two magnificent animals. The Prince de Conde wished to have them, but the count doubled the price his royal highness offered, and got them.

"Every one went to the door with the count; Madame de Lucienne appeared not to have had time to express her gratitude sufficiently, and she pressed his hands, begging him to return soon. The count promised, casting a strange look at me, which made me lower my eyes immediately. I do not know why, he appeared as if he had addressed his answer to me. When I raised my head the count was in his saddle; he bowed once more to Madame de Lucienne, made a general bow to us, and waving his hand as a sign of friendship to Paul, gave his steed the rein,

and starting off at a gallop, was soon out of sight in the turn of the road.

"Every one remained in the same position, looking on in silence, for there was something extraordinary about this man which commanded attention. They felt as if he possessed one of those powerful organizations which nature often, as if for a caprice, encloses in a body which seems too feeble to contain it. The count also appeared as if composed of contrasts; to those who did not know him he seemed to have the weak and languishing debility of a man afflicted with an organic disease. To his friends and companions he was a man of iron, resisting all fatigues, suppressing all emotions and subduing all his inclinations. Paul had seen him pass whole nights either at play or at table, and the next day whilst his companions were worn out, he would start off for a hunt or a race, with fresh companions, whom he would leave as he had done the first, without fatigue appearing to affect him, except by a dry cough and an increased paleness.

"I cannot explain why, but I listened to all these details with an infinite interest. Doubtless the scene I had just witnessed, the *sang-froid*

shown by the count, and the recent emotion I had suffered, might cause the attention which I gave to every one who spoke of him. The most clever calculator could not have invented anything better than this sudden departure, which left in some measure the château deserted, for he who had just quitted it had made a great impression upon its inhabitants.

"Dinner was announced. The conversation interrupted for a time, began again and with renewed vigour at dessert, and as before, the count was the subject of it. Then, whether this constant attention to one person appeared discourteous, or whether some of the qualities accorded to him were doubtful, a discussion arose about his strange existence, his fortune—the source of which was unknown,—and his courage, which one of the guests attributed to his skill in handling the sword and pistol. Paul was very naturally the advocate of him who had saved his life. The count's life was like that of most fashionable men. His fortune was derived from an uncle of his mother, who had died in India. As to his courage, it was in his opinion the least to be doubted, for not only had he given proofs by the many duels he had fought,

but also on many other occasions. Paul then related several, one of which especially made a great impression upon my mind.

"Count Horace on his arrival at Goa, found his uncle dead, but a will had been made in his favour, so that no opposition took place, and although two young Englishmen, relations of the deceased (for the count's mother was English), were equal heirs with him, he was in sole possession of the property he had come to claim. Besides, the two young Englishmen were rich, and both of them officers in the British army at Bombay. They and their brother officers offered a parting dinner to Count Horace, who accepted it.

"He was four years younger then, and he only appeared to be about eighteen years of age, whilst in reality he was twenty-five. His elegant figure, his pale complexion and his white hands, made him appear like a woman dressed up as a man; therefore, at the first glance, the officers measured the courage of their guest by his appearance. The count with that intelligence which distinguishes him, seeing immediately what an effect he had produced, remained quiet, fully determined not to leave Bombay before he had given them a specimen of his indomitable courage.

"On sitting down to table, the two young officers asked their relation if he spoke English; and, although the count knew that language as well as the French, he replied, that he did not understand a word of it, and begged the gentlemen to speak in French, if they wished him to join in the conversation. This declaration gave a great latitude to the guests, and from the very beginning the count perceived that he was the subject of a continuous raillery. Nevertheless, he listened to all he heard, with a smile on his lips, and joy in his eyes. His cheeks only became paler, and twice his teeth cracked the corner of the glass from which he drank. At dessert the noise was redoubled with the French wine, when the conversation turned on hunting; then some one asked the count what kind of game they hunted in France, and how they hunted it. The count, fully determined to play out his part, replied, that sometimes he hunted partridges and hares with a dog, and sometimes deer and foxes on horseback.

"'Ah, ah!' said one of the guests, laughing, 'you hunt hares, foxes, and stags; but here we hunt tigers.'

"'In what way?' said Count Horace, with perfect good humour.

"'In what way!' replied another; 'why mounted on elephants to be sure, with slaves armed with hatchets, who show face to the animal whilst we load and fire.'

"'That must be a nice amusement,' said the count.

"'It is very unfortunate that you leave us so soon, my dear cousin,' said one of the young men, 'or we might have got up a hunt for you.'

"'I should sincerely regret missing such an opportunity,' said Horace; 'and if I had not long to wait for it, I would remain.'

"'That is fortunate,' replied the first, 'for not three leagues from here, in a marsh, is a tigress and her cubs. The Indians, whose sheep were stolen, informed us of it only yesterday. We wanted to wait till the cubs were bigger, and then make a regular *battue;* but as we have so good an opportunity to be agreeable to you, we will have the hunt a fortnight sooner.'

"'I am very grateful to you,' said the count, bowing; 'but is it certain that the tiger really is there?'

"'There is no doubt of it.'

"'And is her exact haunt known?'

"'It can easily be seen from a large rock

which commands a view of the marsh. Her tracks can be traced by the broken reeds, and they all radiate from one centre.'

"'Well,' said the count, filling his glass, and rising, as if to give a toast, 'to the health of him who will go and kill this tigress in the midst of the reeds, between her cubs, alone and on foot, and with no other weapon than this poniard.'

"At these words he took a Malay dagger from the belt of a slave, and laid it on the table.

"'Are you mad?' said one of the guests.

"'No, gentlemen, I am not mad,' replied the count, with a bitterness mixed with contempt; 'and to prove it, I renew my toast. Listen to it, that he who accepts it may know to what he binds himself on emptying his glass. To the health of him, I say, who will go and kill this tigress among the reeds, and between her two cubs, alone, on foot, and unarmed, except with this poniard.'

"A moment's silence occurred, during which the count interrogated successively the eyes of the guests; but they were all cast down.

"'Does no one reply?' said he with a smile. 'Will no one dare to accept my toast? Has no one the courage to pledge me? Well, then, I

will go; and if I do not go, you will say I am an ass, as I say that you are cowards.'

"Saying these words, the count emptied his glass, which he replaced quietly on the table, and moving towards the door, said, 'To-morrow, then, gentlemen,' and went out.

"The next day the count was ready for this terrible fight by six o'clock in the morning, when his companions entered his room. They had come to beg of him to give up this enterprise, the result of which could not fail to prove fatal to him. But the count would listen to nothing. They acknowledged first that their conduct the day before had been very silly. The count thanked them for their excuses, but refused to accept them. They then offered him (if he thought himself too much offended for the affair to pass off without reparation) to choose one from amongst them and fight with him. The count replied with irony, that his religious principles prohibited him from spilling his neighbour's blood; and that, for his part, he retracted the bitter words he had made use of the day before; but as to the fight, nothing on earth would induce him to abandon it. At these words he invited the gentlemen to accompany him on

horseback, assuring them, however, that if they would rather not honour him with their company, he would still go alone and attack the tigress.

"This decision was spoken in a tone of voice so firm and so determined, that they gave over trying to persuade him, and mounting their horses, they rejoined him at the eastern gate of the city which was the appointed rendezvous.

"The cavalcade journeyed on in silence to the spot indicated; each of them was furnished with a double-barrelled gun or a rifle. The count alone was unarmed. His dress, perfectly elegant, was that of a fashionable young man who was going to take his morning's walk in the Bois de Boulogne. All the officers looked at him with astonishment, not believing it possible that he could preserve that *sang-froid* till the end.

"When they had arrived at the border of the marsh, the officers renewed their attempts to dissuade the count from his purpose. In the middle of the discussion, and as if to assist them, a growl was heard coming from a distance of a few hundred feet. The restive horses pranced and neighed at the sound.

"'You see, gentlemen,' said the count, 'it is

too late, we are recognized; the animal knows that we are here, and I do not wish, upon leaving India, to which I shall probably never return, to leave behind me a bad impression even to a tigress. Forward, gentlemen.' And the count urged his horse towards the rock which bordered the marsh, and from which the reeds could be seen, amongst which the tigress waited for him.

"When they reached the foot of the rock, a second roar was heard, but so loud and so much nearer, that one of the horses shied and nearly threw his rider. All the others, with foaming mouths, distended nostrils, and glaring eyes, shivered and trembled as if they had just come out of iced water. The officers dismounted, and the horses were confided to the care of the servants, when the count first began to ascend the elevated point, from whose summit he calculated upon being able to examine the ground.

"Indeed, from the top, he could follow with his eyes among the broken reeds the track of the animal he was about to fight. These tracks or paths, about two feet wide, opened in the high grass, and each (as the officers said) terminated in one centre, where the plants, all beaten down, formed a clearing. A third roar coming from this

place dispelled all doubts, and the count knew where to find his enemy.

"The elder of the officers again approached the count, but he, divining his intention, coldly motioned to him that it was useless. Then, buttoning his great-coat, and begging one of his cousins to lend him the silk scarf he wore round his body, to wrap round his arm, he took the poniard from the Malay and tied it round his hand with a damp handkerchief. Then laying his hat on the ground, and gracefully putting back his hair, he entered the reeds by the shortest road and disappeared instantly, leaving his astonished companions staring, hardly believing in such boldness.

"He advanced slowly and cautiously along the road he had taken, which was so straight that he had neither to turn to the right nor the left. About two hundred paces farther on, he heard a deep growl, which showed that his enemy was upon her guard, and that if she had not yet seen him he was at any rate suspected. Nevertheless, he only stopped for a second, and as soon as the noise ceased continued his way. Fifty paces further on he again halted; it struck him that if he had not arrived at her lair, he was not far from

it. He was now in the clearing which was strewn with bones, some of which still bore pieces of flesh upon them. He looked round him, and saw the tigress half lying down in the grass, with her mouth open and her eyes fixed upon him; her cubs were playing round her like young kittens.

"What passed in his mind at this sight he alone could tell, but his soul is an abyss from which nothing comes out. For some time he and the tigress looked at each other immovable, and noticing, that fearful of leaving her young she did not approach him, he went to the attack.

"He stopped within four feet of her, and seeing her make a movement as if to rise up, he rushed upon her. Those who looked and listened, heard at the same moment a roar and a cry; they saw the reeds agitated for some minutes, then silence and tranquillity succeeded. *All was over.*

"They listened for an instant to hear if the count were coming back, but he did not return. They were ashamed of having allowed him to enter alone, and decided that if they could not save his life, they might at least seek his body. They advanced boldly all together into the marsh, stopping from time to time to listen, then went

on again. At last they arrived at the spot, and found the adversaries lying one upon the other. The tigress was dead, and the count had swooned. As for the cubs, being too young to devour the body, they licked up the blood.

"The tigress had received seventeen stabs, and the count a bite, which had broken his left arm, and a blow with the animal's paw, which had laid open his breast.

"The officers carried off the bodies of the tigress and the count, and they entered Bombay lying one beside the other, borne on the same bier. The Malay had strangled the little cubs, and slung them on each side of his saddle.

"When the count got up a fortnight afterwards, he found the skin of the tigress at the foot of his bed, with teeth of pearls, eyes of rubies, and claws of gold: it was a gift from the officers of the regiment in which his cousins served."

CHAPTER VIII.

"These narratives made a deep impression upon my mind. Courage is one of the greatest attractions that a man can possess in the eyes of a woman. Is it because of our weakness, and our being unable to do anything of ourselves, that we need always a support? Whatever was said to the disadvantage of the count, the only incidents that remained in my mind were these two hunts, at one of which I assisted. Nevertheless, I did not think without fear on this terrible *sang-froid*, to which Paul owed his life. How many dreadful combats must have taken place within him before he could subdue his will, and what a fire must have devoured his soul, before his heart became a cinder and his blood turned to ice.

"The great misfortune of our time is the search after the romantic, and the contempt of the simple. The more society divests itself of its poetry, the more, active imaginations demand the marvellous, which disappears every day from the

world only to take refuge in the theatres and in novels. There it creates an interest in all, even when exhibiting exceptional characters.

"You will not be surprised, then, that the image of Count Horace presented itself to the mind of a young girl, in which so few real events had as yet left any trace. Some days after this, we saw two horsemen coming up the avenue to the house; and when M. Paul de Lucienne and Mons. le Comte Horace de Beuzeval were announced, for the first time in my life I felt my heart beat at a name, a cloud passed before my eyes, and I rose with the intention of leaving the room. My mother detained me, and the gentlemen entered.

"I know not what I said to them at first, but I must have appeared very timid and very awkward, for on raising my eyes, I perceived those of the count fixed on mine with a strange expression I shall never forget. However, by degrees I cast aside this preoccupation and became myself; then I could listen and look at him as calmly as any one else.

"I found he had the same impassible face, the same fixed and searching look, which had made such an impression on me, and the same soft voice,

which, together with his hands and feet, appeared to belong rather to a woman than to a man; still when he was animated, his voice had a power which seemed incompatible with its first sounds. Paul, as a grateful friend, had opened the conversation on a topic in which the count was most likely to shine: he spoke of his travels. The count hesitated as to whether he should permit himself to be dragged into this attraction of *amour-propre*. It was said that he feared to monopolize all the conversation, and to introduce the "I" into the common generalities of a first interview. Soon, however, the remembrance of the places where he had been returned to his memory, the picturesque life in wild regions, in opposition to the monotonous existence in civilized countries. The count found himself in the middle of the luxuriant vegetation of India, and the marvellous aspect of the Maldives. He related to us his adventures in the Gulf of Bengal, and his fights with Malay pirates. He allowed himself to be carried away with the brilliant painting of this animated life, every hour of which brought some emotion to the spirit or to the heart. He showed us the whole phases of this primitive life, where man is, as he likes,

either slave or king, has no bonds but his caprice, no limits but the horizon, and, when tired on land, spreads the sails of his ship like the wings of an eagle, and seeks on the ocean solitude and immensity. Then he returned all at once to our usual society, where all is niggardly, crimes and virtues; or where all is factitious, face and heart; where slaves are imprisoned by laws, and captives bound at will. There is for each hour of the day forms of dress and colours, gloves to wear, and that under pain of ridicule, that is to say, of death, for in France ridicule stains a name more cruelly than baseness or blood.

"I need not tell you what bitter ironical eloquence there was in this *sortie* of the count against our society; it was truly very near to blasphemy, one of those creations of poets — "Manfred," or "Karl Moor;" it was one of those stormy organizations contending against the mean and common requirements of our society; it was the Genius scorning the world, and who, rejecting its laws, carries them away with him as a lion does the miserable nets set to catch a fox or a wolf.

"I listened to this terrible philosophy as I would have read a page of Byron or Goethe; it was the

same energy of thought heightened with all the power of expression. Then as that cold face threw aside its mask of ice, it lighted up from the heart, and his eyes darted forth fire; whilst his voice, generally so subdued, assumed successively gloomy and lively accents; then suddenly enthusiasm or bitterness, hope or contempt, poetry or matter; but all disappeared from his countenance, in a smile such as I have never seen before nor since; it contained more despair and more disdain than any long-drawn sigh could have done.

"After a visit of an hour's duration, Paul and the count left us. When they were gone, my my mother and I looked at each other in silence; I felt a great weight removed from my breast. The presence of this man weighed upon me, just as Mephistophiles did on Margaret. The impression he had produced upon me was so visible that my mother began to defend him, without my having attacked him. She had heard of the count for some time, and, as usual with all remarkable men, the world had arrived at the most opposite opinions about him. My mother regarded him in a point of view different to mine; all those sophisms uttered so boldly by the count,

only appeared to her as wit—a sort of slander against society, which is heard every day against individuals. She did not place him either so high or so low as I did, inwardly. It resulted that this difference of opinion, which I would not contend against, determined me to appear as if I were no longer thinking of him.

"In about ten minutes I pleaded a slight headache and went out into the park; there nothing distracted my mind from its all-engrossing subject, and I had not gone two hundred paces, before I was obliged to admit that I had not wished to speak of the count, so that I might think of him the more. This conviction frightened me. I did not love the count, however; for when he was announced, my heart beat more from fear than joy. Then again I did not fear him, or logically, I ought not to fear him, for in what way could he influence my destiny. I had seen him once by chance; a second time by courtesy, and I would probably never see him again. With his adventurous character and taste for travel, he might leave France at any moment. Then this passage in my life was an apparition and a dream: a fortnight, a month, a year would pass, and I would forget him. In the meanwhile,

when the dinner-bell sounded, it surprised me in the midst of the same thoughts, and made me tremble. The hours had passed like minutes.

"On entering the dining-room, my mother handed to me an invitation from the Countess M———, who had remained in Paris during the summer, and was about to give a grand *soirée*, half musical, half dancing, in honour of her daughter's birthday. Always thinking of me, my mother wished to consult me before replying. I accepted it eagerly. It was a powerful distraction from the one thought which had beset me. Indeed, we had only three days to prepare, and these three days would be strictly confined to the preparations for the ball, so it was evident that the remembrance of the count would be obliterated, or, at any rate, would not present itself during the important occupation of the toilette. For my part, I did all I could to accomplish this end. I spoke of the *soirée* with an interest my mother had never seen in me before. I begged to return to Paris the same evening, under a pretext that we had scarcely time to order our dresses and flowers; but in reality that the change of place might aid me in my struggle with my thoughts. My mother, always kind,

yielded to my wishes, and we started the same evening after dinner.

"I was not deceived; the attention I was obliged to devote to the preparation for this *soirée*, a rest from that joyous carelessness of youth which I had not yet lost, the prospect of a ball in a season when there are so few, was a diversion to my senseless terrors, and drove away for the moment the phantom which haunted me. The wished-for day at length arrived; it was passed by me in a state of feverish activity quite new to my mother; she was quite happy at the joy I was promising myself. Poor mother!

"Ten o'clock struck; I had been ready for twenty minutes; I know not how it happened, but I, who was always late, had this time to wait for my mother. At last we started. Nearly all our winter society had returned to Paris to be present at this *fête*.

"There was a gay world in those dancing-rooms. During a moment's respite, the Countess M—— took my arm, and to escape the heat, led me into the card-rooms; a curious sight to see. All the artistic, literary and political celebrities of the time were there. I knew a good many of them, but there were still some unknown to me.

Madame M——, with great good-nature, mentioned their names to me, with a short running commentary upon each, when suddenly, on entering one of these rooms, I trembled, letting these words escape me: 'The Count Horace.'

"'Well, yes, the Count Horace,' said Madame M——, smiling; 'do you know him?'

"'We met at Madame Lucienne's in the country.'

"'Oh yes,' replied the countess; 'I heard something about a hunt, and an accident happening to young Monsieur Lucienne; was it not so?'

"At this moment the count raised his eyes, and I perceived something like a smile pass across his face. 'Gentlemen,' said he, to the three players who sat at his table, 'will you permit me to retire? I will promise to send you a substitute.'.

"'Certainly not,' said Paul; 'you have won four thousand francs from us, and will send us a substitute who will perhaps only stake ten Louis! No, no!'

"The count, half risen, reseated himself, but at the first round one of the players began the game, and the count won. He now was obliged

to remain. The count's adversary threw down his cards, and the count threw down his, without looking at them, saying, 'I have lost,' as he pushed the gold and bank-notes over to his adversary. He rose and said to Paul, 'Am I free to go now?'

"'Not yet, my dear friend,' replied Paul, who had looked at the count's cards, 'for you have five diamonds, whilst this gentleman has only four spades.'

"'Madam,' said the count turning to us, and speaking to the mistress of the house. 'I know that Mademoiselle Eugenie will make a collection for the poor this evening, so will you allow me to offer my tribute?'

"At these words he took a little work-basket, which was on a stand beside the card-table, put into it the eight thousand francs he had before him, and presented them to the countess.

"'But I do not know whether I ought to accept it,' replied Madam M——, 'it is so large a sum.'

"'Oh!' the count answered smiling, 'it is not only in my own name I offer it; these gentlemen have contributed largely, so that Mademoiselle M—— will have to thank them, not me.

"At these words he passed into the ball-room, leaving the basket full of gold and bank-notes in the hands of the countess.

"'There is one of his peculiarities,' said the countess; 'he has no doubt seen some lady he would like to dance with, and this is the price he pays for the pleasure. But I must lock up this basket, so let me show you into the ball-room.'

"Madame M—— took me to my mother, and I had scarcely sat down, when the count approached and asked me to dance.

"What the countess had just said returned to my mind. I felt myself blush, and knew that I was going to stammer. I handed him my little book, six dancers were there before us. He turned over the leaf, and as if he did not wish his name to be mixed with theirs, he wrote it on the top of the page, for the seventh country dance. Then he returned the book to me, pronouncing some words which my agitation prevented me from comprehending, and went to lean up against the door-post. I was about to beg my mother to leave the ball-room, for I trembled so much that I could scarcely stand, when I heard a rapid and brilliant chord. The ball was suspended. Listz was sitting at the piano.

"He played the 'Invitation' to Weber's waltz.

"Never had that clever artist exceeded the wonders of his execution; perhaps I had never been in a frame of mind so prepared to appreciate this melancholy and passionate composition. It appeared as if I heard for the first time the suffering heart, praying, groaning, and breaking, in which the author of 'Der Freyschutz' has expressed the sighs in his melodies. All that music, that language of angels, has in its tones of hope, sadness, and grief, appeared to be concentrated in this piece; the variations, rendered according to the inspiration of the player, came at the end of the motive, like explanatory notes. I had often played this brilliant fantasy myself, and I was astonished to-day, when I heard it played by another, to find in it beauties I had never before even suspected of being there. Was it the admirable talent of the artist which brought them out? Was it a new disposition of my mind? Had the skilful hand which glided over the notes, so deeply dug the mine as to find in it unknown veins of ore? Or had my heart received so violent a shock, that the hitherto torpid fibres had been roused up? Whatever it was, the effect was magical. The sounds floated

in the air like a vapour, and filled me with melody. At this moment I raised my eyes; I saw again that the count's were turned towards me. I let my head fall rapidly, but it was too late; I could not see his eyes, but I felt his gaze upon me as I blushed deeply, and an involuntary trembling seized me. Soon Listz rose, and I heard the noise of several people gathering round him to compliment him. I hoped that during this moment the count would leave his place. I raised my head, he was no longer against the door. I breathed again, but was careful not to pursue my search any further, for I feared to catch his glance and I would rather not know that he was there.

"In a minute silence was restored, a fresh person was at the piano. I heard by the prolonged 'Hush!' in the adjoining rooms, that curiosity was greatly excited, but I dared not raise my eyes. A rapid scale was played, a long and sad prelude succeeded; then a sonorous, deep, vibrating voice sang these words to one of Schubert's airs:—

"'I have studied everything; philosophy, law, and medicine; I have searched in the hearts of men—I have descended into the depths of the earth—I have given to my mind the wings of

the eagle, to soar above the clouds; and to what has this long study brought me? To doubt and discouragement. It is true, I have neither illusion nor scruples. I fear neither God nor Satan. But I have gained these advantages at the price of all the joys of life.'

"At the first word I recognized the voice of Count Horace. It can easily be guessed what an effect these words of *Faust*, from the mouth of him who sang them, made upon me. The surprise was general—a moment of deep silence succeeded the last note, which sounded plaintively like a soul in distress; then frantic applause came from all sides. I then looked at the count, to all else his face, no doubt, looked calm and impassible: but to me, the slight compression of his mouth clearly showed the feverish agitation, the same which had seized him during one of his visits to the château. Madame M—— approached him in her turn to compliment him, then his countenance resumed a smiling and joyous aspect.

"The count offered her his arm, and was only a man like all men. From the manner in which he looked at her, I concluded he was complimenting her on her dress. As he was

speaking to her, he cast a look at me, which met mine. I was nearly crying out; I was in some way surprised. Doubtless he remarked my agitation and pitied me, for he led Madame into an adjoining room and disappeared. Just then the musicians gave the signal for dancing to be resumed, and the first of my partners rushed towards me. I mechanically took his hand, and suffered him to lead me to whatever place he liked. I danced, and that is all I remember; then two or three country dances followed, during which, I again became calm. At last a new pause, destined for another musical intermission succeeded.

"Madame M—— advanced towards me; she came to beg of me to sing a part in the duet of the first act of *Don Juan*. I refused at first, for I felt myself incapable, all natural timidity apart, to articulate a single note. My mother seeing the discussion, joined her entreaties to those of the countess, who offered to accompany me. I was afraid, if I continued to refuse, that my mother would suspect something. I had sung this duet so often that I had no excuse to offer, and I was obliged to yield. The Countess M—— took my hand and led me to the piano. She sat

down, whilst I stood behind her chair, with my eyes cast down, not daring to look round me, lest I should again encounter that look which followed me everywhere. A young man placed himself on the other side of the countess, and as I stole a glance at my partner, a cold shiver passed through me. It was Count Horace who was about to sing the part of Don Juan.

"You may imagine my emotion, but it was too late to withdraw, every eye was fixed upon us. Madame M—— commenced the prelude. The count began. It was quite another voice, quite another man that sang; and when he began '*Là ci darem la mano,*' I trembled, hoping that I was deceived, not thinking it possible that the powerful voice, which had made us all shudder with Schubert's melody, could subdue itself to such gay and graceful tones. From the first word, a murmur of applause ran through the room, and when in my turn I sang tremblingly, '*Vorrei e non vorrei, mi trema un poco il cor,*' there was such an expression of fear in my voice, that the applause was continued loudly, then suddenly a profound silence succeeded.

"I cannot tell you what love there was in the count's voice, as he resumed '*Vieni mi bel*

diletto,' and what attractions and promises he set forth in this sentence: '*Io cangierò tua sorte.*' All this was so applicable to me, and this duet seemed to have been chosen for the situation of my heart, that I felt ready to faint on singing,' '*Presto non so più forte.*' Here the expression of the music changed, instead of the coquettish lament of Zerlina, it was the cry of the deepest distress. Just then I felt that the count had come nearer to me, his hand, which was hanging beside me, touched mine; a mist passed before my eyes, I seized the countess' chair and clung to it. Thanks to this support, I was enabled to stand; but when we sang together '*Andiamo, andiam mio bene,*' I felt his breath in my hair and on my shoulders, a shudder passed through my veins, and on pronouncing the word *Amor,* I gave a scream which exhausted all my strength, and fainted.

"My mother rushed towards me, but she would have been too late, if the countess had not caught me in her arms. My fainting was attributed to the heat, and I was carried into another room. The smelling-salts, the window they opened, and the drops of water which were thrown on my face, soon brought me to myself. Madam M——

wished me to return to the ball-room, but I would not go. My mother, anxious herself, was this time of my opinion, so we called the carriage and returned home. I went immediately to my room, where, on taking off my glove, I found a paper which had been put there during my swoon, and on opening it, I read these words written in pencil, *'You love me! Thanks! thanks!'"*

CHAPTER IX.

"I PASSED a wretched night—a night of sobs and tears. You do not know, you men, what a young girl's anguish is, reared under her mother's eye, whose heart, pure as a mirror, has never yet been stained by any breath, whose lips have never pronounced the word love, and who sees herself suddenly taken, like a defenceless bird, by a will more powerful than her resistance, who feels a hand so strong dragging her, and who hears a voice saying, 'You love me,' without her having said, 'I love you.'

"Oh! I swear to you that I do not know what kept me from going mad that night. I thought I was lost. I kept repeating incessantly, quite low, 'I love him! I love him!' and that with so great a terror, that I am not sure, even now, that I was not a prey to quite a different feeling than that which I thought I felt. However, it was probable that all these emotions which I had experienced were proofs of affection, as the

count who had witnessed them all had so interpreted them. As for me, they were the first sensations of the kind I had felt. I have often been told to fear or hate those only who have done you harm, therefore I could neither fear or hate the count; and if the feeling I had for him was neither hate nor fear, it must then be love.

"The next morning, as we were sitting down to breakfast, two cards were handed to my mother—they were from the Count Horace de Beuzeval. He had sent to inquire after my health, and whether my indisposition had proved serious. This step, early as it was, only appeared to my mother a simple piece of politeness. The count was singing with me when the accident had happened, and this circumstance excused his eagerness. Only then did my mother perceive how ill and fatigued I looked; she was anxious at first, but I reassured her, by telling her, that I felt no pain, and that the air and quiet of the country would quite restore me, if she would like to return there. My mother had only one will, and that was mine. She ordered the horses to be put to the carriage, and at two o'clock we set off.

"I was leaving Paris with the same eagerness

with which, four days before, I had left the country; for my first thought on seeing the count's cards, was, that as soon as we were visible he would present himself in person. Now, I wished to fly from him—I wished never to see him again. After what had taken place, after the letter he had written me, I thought I should die of shame if I found myself with him. All these thoughts crowding in my brain made me blush so suddenly and so deeply, that my mother thought I wanted air in the close carriage, and ordered the coachman to stop that the footman might let down the hood. It was the last days of September—that is to say, the best part of the year when the leaves of some of the trees in the wood begin to redden. There is something like spring in the autumn, and the last perfumes of the year resemble its first budding. The air, the sight of nature, all these noises of the forest, which only form one, prolonged, melancholy, and indefinable, began to distract my thoughts, when, suddenly, at one of the turns of the road, I perceived a horseman; although he was still at a great distance I seized my mother's arm, and was about to beg of her to return to Paris, for I had recognized the count; but I stopped immediately.

What pretext could I give for this whim, which appeared a caprice without any reason? I therefore took courage. The horseman was going at a walk, so that we soon overtook him. It was, as I have said, the count.

"Scarcely had he recognized us, when he approached us and began to excuse himself for having sent to inquire for me so early, but being obliged to start during the day for Mons. de Lucienne's country seat where he was invited to spend a few days, he did not wish to leave Paris in anxiety: if it had been at a proper hour he would have called himself. I stammered some words, and my mother thanked him.

"'We are also returning to the country for the rest of the season,' said she.

"'Then will you permit me to be your escort to the château?' replied the count.

"My mother bowed, smiling. The thing was quite simple. Our country-house was three leagues nearer than that of Mons. de Lucienne, and the same road led to both. The count continued to gallop near us for the remaining five leagues; but the rapidity of our journey, and the difficulty of keeping near the door, prevented us from conversing much. On arriving at the

château, he dismounted and assisted my mother to alight; then he offered me his hand for my turn; I could not refuse, but held out my hand coldly. He took it without eagerness or affectation, as he would have taken any other's; but I felt that he left a letter in it. Before I could say a word or move, the count turned to my mother and bowed, then he mounted his horse and declining my mother's invitation to rest a short time, soon disappeared on the road to Mons. de Lucienne's.

"I remained immovable. My fingers grasped the letter which I dared not let drop, but which, nevertheless, I was resolved not to read. My mother called me; I followed her. What was I to do with the letter? if I tore it up, the pieces might be found. There was no fire to burn it, so I concealed it in my dress.

"I know no punishment equal to what I experienced upon entering my own room. This letter seemed to burn my breast. I felt as if a supernatural power made its every line known to my heart, which it almost touched. This paper had a magnetic virtue. At the moment I received it, I could have torn it in pieces, burnt it even without hesitation; but when I was alone, I had no

longer the courage. I dismissed my maid, telling her I would undress myself alone; then I sat on my bed for an hour immovable, with my eyes staring, and the letter crumpled up in my hand.

"At last I opened it, and read:—

"'You love me, Pauline, for you fly from me. Yesterday you quitted the ball where I was, today leave the town where I am; but all is useless. There are some destinies which are never fulfilled, because they never meet; but as soon as they do meet, they ought not to be separated.

"'I am unlike other men. At the age of pleasure, carelessness, and joy, I suffered much, thought much, and regretted much. I am twenty-eight years of age. You are the first woman I have ever loved, for I do love you, Pauline.

"'Thanks to you; and if God does not break this, my heart's last hope, I will forget my past existence and trust in the future. The past is the only thing in which God is without power, and love without consolation. The future is God's, the present is ours; but the past is nothing. If God, who can do anything, gave forgetfulness to the past, there would be neither

blasphemers, materialists, nor atheists in this world.

"'All is now spoken, Pauline, for would I teach you that which you do not know, or would I tell you what you have not guessed? We are both young, both rich, and both free. I can be yours, and you can be mine. One word from you and I address myself to your mother, and we are married. If my conduct, like my mind, appears different from that of the world, pardon my peculiarities and accept me. You will make me a better man.

"'If, contrary to what I hope, Pauline, a motive (which I cannot foresee, but which nevertheless may exist) should cause you to fly from me, as you have hitherto tried to do, know that it would be useless. I would follow you about everywhere, as I have already done. Nothing detains me in one place more than in another; on the contrary, everything attracts me to where you are. To go before you, or to walk after you, will hereafter be my only aim. I have lost many years, and risked my life and soul a hundred times to obtain an end which did not promise me the same happiness.

"'Adieu, Pauline! I do not threaten you, I

implore you. I love you — you also love me. Have pity on yourself and me!'

"It would be impossible for me to tell you what passed in my mind on reading this strange letter. I seemed a prey to one of those terrible dreams, in which, threatened with a danger, you try to fly, but the feet are glued to the earth, and your breathing stops;—you wish to cry out but the voice gives no sound. Then the excess of fear breaks the sleep, and you wake up with a beating heart and a moist brow.

"But there was nothing to wake me. It was not a dream, it was a terrible reality which seized me with its powerful hand and dragged me with it. Yet, after all, what novelty was there in my life? A man had appeared, that was all. Scarcely had I ever exchanged a word or a look with this man. What right, then, had he to bind, as he had done, my destiny with his and to speak to me as my master, when I had never even thought of him as a friend? I could not see this man the next day, neither speak to him nor know him. But I could do nothing; I was weak,—I was a woman,—I loved him!

"Besides, did I know anything of it? Was

this feeling I experienced love? Does love enter the heart, preceded by so great a fear? Young and ignorant as I was, did I know even what love was? Why had I not burnt this fatal letter before reading it? Had I not in receiving it, given the count the right to think I loved him? But still, what could I do? A scene before the valets and the servants.—No, to give it to my mother, to tell her all, confess all—confess what? Childish fears, nothing else. Then, what would my mother think on reading such a letter? She would think I had encouraged the count by a word, look, or gesture. Without that, what right would he have to tell me I loved him? No, I dared not say anything about it to my mother.

"But this letter; it must be burned at once. I approached the candle, it caught fire, and thus like everything that has existed but exists no longer, it was soon nothing but a few ashes. Then I undressed myself quickly, hastened into bed, and blew out my lights in order to conceal myself in darkness. Oh! how, in spite of the darkness I closed my eyes,—how I covered my hands,—and how, notwithstanding this double veil I saw everything again. That fatal letter

seemed to be written on the walls of the room. I had only read it once, but it was so deeply engraved on my mind, that each line traced by an invisible hand, appeared as soon as the preceding one was effaced; thus I read and re-read this letter ten times, twenty times—all night long. Oh! I assure you that between the state I was in and madness there was but a feeble barrier—a veil very easily torn.

"Towards morning I slept, worn out with fatigue. When I awoke it was already late, and my maid told me that Madame de Lucienne and her daughter had arrived. Then a sudden idea caught me; I ought to tell everything to Madame de Lucienne, as she had always been kind to me, and it was at her house I had first seen Count Horace. Count Horace was her son's friend. She was the best possible confidant for a secret like mine. God had sent her to me. At this moment my door opened, and Madame de Lucienne appeared. Oh! then, indeed, I thought she had been sent; I stretched out my arms to her, sobbing, and she came and sat down near me.

"'Now then, my child,' said she after a minute, and pulling away my hands in which I had buried

my face. 'Let us see what is the matter with you.'

"'Oh! how unhappy I am,' cried I.

"'The misfortunes of your age, my child, are like storms in spring; they pass quickly away, and only make the sky more pure.'

"'Oh! if you but knew all!'

"'I do know all,' said Madame de Lucienne.

"'Who told you?"

"'He did.'

"'He told you I loved him?'

"'He told me he hoped so at least. Was he mistaken?'

"'I do not know myself. I know nothing of love but the name. How, then, could you expect me to see clearly into my heart, and in the midst of the trouble I experience analyze the feeling which has caused it?'

"'Come, come, I see that Horace reads your heart better than you do yourself.'

"I began to weep. 'Well,' continued Madame de Lucienne, 'I do not see much cause for tears, so let us talk reasonably. Count Horace is young, good-looking, and rich; there is more than enough to excuse the sentiment which he inspires within you. The count is free, you are

eighteen, it would be in every respect an agreeable union.'

"'Oh, madame!'

"'Never mind, say no more, I know all I wish to know. I will return to Madame de Meulien and send Lucie to you.'

"'But pray do not say anything about it.'

"'Rest assured I know what I have to do. *Au revoir,* my dear child. There now dry your pretty eyes, and kiss me.'

"A second time I threw my arms about her neck. Five minutes afterwards Lucie entered my room. I dressed myself, and went down stairs.

"I found my mother serious but more tender than usual. Several times during breakfast she looked at me with anxious sadness, and each time I felt the blush of shame mount to my temples. At four o'clock Madame de Lucienne and her daughter left us. My mother was the same towards me as she had always been, not a word of the visit of Madame de Lucienne, or the cause which brought her.

"In the evening, on going as usual to embrace my mother before retiring to rest, I perceived her weeping. I fell on my knees and hid my

head in her bosom. On seeing this movement, and guessing the feeling which prompted it, she placed her hands on my shoulder, and drawing me towards her, said, 'Be happy, my child; that is all I ask God.'

"Two days after Madame de Lucienne asked my hand formally from my mother.

"Six weeks after, I married Count Horace."

CHAPTER X.

"THE marriage took place at Lucienne, early in November, and we returned to Paris at the beginning of the winter season.

"We occupied the mansion all together. My mother gave me twenty-five thousand livres for my marriage portion—the count settled upon me nearly as much. There remained for my mother about fifteen thousand.

"Horace presented me to his two friends, whom he begged me to receive as his brothers. For six years they had been so intimate that they were called 'the inseparables.' A fourth, whom they always regretted, and of whom they continually were speaking, was killed the year before whilst hunting in the Pyrenees, where he had a château. I cannot reveal to you the names of these two men, and at the conclusion of my recital you will understand why; but as I shall be compelled from time to time to

designate them, I will call one Henry, and the other Max.

"I will not say to you that I was happy; the feeling that I entertained for Horace has always been, and will continue to be, inexplicable. One might say it was respect mixed with fear—that was, at least the impression which he produced on all those with whom he had any intimacy. His two friends themselves, so free and so familiar as they were with him, rarely contradicted him and always gave way to him — if not as their master, at least as their elder brother. Although well skilled in bodily exercises, they were far inferior to him in all of them. The count had transformed the billiard-room into a fencing-room, and one of the walks of the garden was set apart for practising with pistols. Every day these gentlemen spent most of it in exercising themselves either with the rapier or the pistol. Sometimes I assisted at these games. Horace was rather their professor than their adversary. He exhibited on these occasions all that fearful calm, a proof of which I had seen him give when in the house of Madame de Lucienne; and many duels, all of which had terminated in his favour, gave evidence that on

the ground, this *sang-froid* at the most critical moment, never deserted him.

"He appeared to me to be happy,—at least, he constantly repeated that he was, although frequently his gloomy expression hardly bore out his own speeches. Often terrible dreams disturbed his sleep, and then this man, so calm, so brave during the day, if he awoke at night under the influence of these visions, shuddered like a child with the effects of the fright. He attributed the cause of this fear to an accident which happened to his mother during her pregnancy. Every night before going to bed, wherever he was, he placed a brace of pistols ready to his hand, more he said to prevent a return of these dreams than from actual terror. At first this caused me much uneasiness and fear, for I always had an impression that in some of his fits of somnambulism he might use these arms. By degrees I reassured myself, and at last got into the habit of making him myself take the precaution. Another most strange circumstance which now occurs to me was, that night and day a horse always saddled was ready for the road.

"Winter passed in the midst of *fêtes* and balls.

Horace had much enlarged his circle of acquaintance, and his rooms were joined to mine, so that we saw a great number of guests. He accompanied me everywhere with extreme kindness, and strange to say, he surprised every one —he had completely given up gaming. In the spring we left Paris, and returned to the country.

"Our days passed, one half amongst our own family, the other visiting amongst our friends. We had continued to see Madame de Lucienne and her children as our own. My life as a young girl appeared hardly changed, and was nearly the same as before I was married; so that if this state was not happiness, it looked so very like it that I could hardly deceive myself. The only thing which caused me trouble was the lowness of spirits which continually oppressed Horace without any apparent cause. The horrible dreams increased more and more. Often have I gone to him seeing his melancholy by day, or awoke him in one of those paroxysms during the night. The moment he recognized me his countenance resumed that calm, cold expression which I had so often remarked. In the mean time there was nothing to deceive

me, but I could not help remarking how great was the distance between this apparent tranquillity and real happiness.

"About the beginning of June, Henry and Max, those two young men of whom I have already spoken, came to see us. I knew the friendship which existed between them and Horace. My mother and I received them,—she as friends, I as brothers. They occupied rooms close to ours, and the count had bells with particular marks placed so as to communicate with their rooms and ours. He gave also directions that three horses instead of one should now be kept constantly saddled. My waiting-maid told me that the other domestics had informed her that they had the same custom as my husband, and never slept without a brace of pistols at the head of the bed.

"Since the arrival of his friends, Horace was almost exclusively with them. Their amusements were just the same as in Paris; viz., long rides on horseback, fencing, and pistol-shooting. The month of July passed away thus; then, towards the middle of August, the count announced to me, that he would be obliged to leave me in a few days for two or three months.

"As this was the first separation since our marriage, you can well understand how affrighted I was at the announcement. The count tried to reassure me, by saying that this journey which perhaps I imagined was a long one, was, on the contrary, in one of the provinces close to Paris,—in fact, in Normandy. He was about to go with his friends to the Château de Burcy, Count Horace's residence, in Normandy. Each possessed a country-house; Henry's was in La Vendée, the other was situated between Toulon and Nice. In fine, they passed three months in every year during the hunting season at each other's houses. It was Horace's turn this year to receive his friends. I immediately offered myself to accompany him to do the honours of his house; but the count replied, that the château was only a rendezvous for the chase, badly kept, poorly furnished, and only fit for hunters habituated to live as well as they could, but not for a lady accustomed to all the comfort and all the luxury of life. During his present visit, however, orders would be given that the most extensive repairs should be effected, so that when his year again came round, I might accompany him and do the honours of his manor.

"This incident, simple and natural as it appeared to my mother, made me exceedingly miserable. I had never spoken to her of the melancholy nor the dreams of Horace. His explanation of them always appeared so unlikely, that I was forced to suppose that he had some motive, and that he either could not, or would not, tell me the truth. Then, it might appear ridiculous for me to trouble myself about his three months' absence, and so strange to follow Horace, that I concealed my feelings, and spoke no more of his intended journey.

"The day of separation arrived; it was the 27th of August. The gentlemen wished to be installed at Burcy, for the opening day of the hunting, which was arranged for the 1st of September. They left us in a postchaise, having ordered the horses to follow in charge of the Malay, who was to rejoin them at the château.

"At the parting moment, I could not prevent myself from bursting into tears. I took Horace into a room, and implored him for the last time to take me with him. I spoke to him of my unknown fears—I recalled to his memory his melancholy, those incomprehensible terrors which seized him so suddenly. At these words, the

blood mounted to his face, and for the first time he gave me a look of impatience. He immediately recovered himself, and addressing me with the greatest kindness, he promised me, that if the château was habitable, of which he had great doubt, he would immediately write to me to join him. I consoled myself with this promise and this hope; and I saw him depart with more peace of mind than I anticipated.

"The first days of our separation were frightful. I cannot say, I repeat, that my grief was engendered by affection; but I had a depressing sentiment and an unremitting suspicion, that a great misfortune was soon to overtake me. Two days after the departure of Horace I received a letter from him, dated Caen. He had on his journey stopped to dine in that city, and was very anxious to write to me, remembering the state of uneasiness in which he left me. After reading his letter I felt less uneasy about him, till I came to the last word. It revived all my suspicions, all my fears, inasmuch as they were more cruel than real; to any one else except myself they might have seemed even chimerical; but the count, instead of writing *au revoir*, wrote the fatal word *adieu!* A broken spirit is warped by the merest

trifles. I almost fainted when I read the last word.

"I received a second letter from him, dated Burcy. He had found the château in a most dreadful state of dilapidation. There was not one room into which the wind and rain had not free entrance, and it was totally useless, therefore, for me to dream of joining him this year at least. I know not why I was anxious about receiving this letter: it had much less effect upon me than the first I had received.

"Some days after the arrival of this letter, we read in our newspapers an account of the assassinations and robberies which had alarmed all Normandy. A third letter from Horace gave us news of himself; but it would appear that he attached no importance to the robberies in comparison to what we did. I replied to him beseeching him to return to us immediately, for that these fearful events appeared to me to be the beginning of a realization of my worst anticipations.

"Fresh outrages became more frequent and more appalling. I in turn now became subject to sudden melancholy and horrid dreams. No longer dared I write to Horace. My last letter remained unanswered. I sought Madame de

Lucienne, who, since the evening when I had told her everything, had become my adviser. I mentioned to her my fears and my anticipations. She told me then what my mother had twenty times told be before, that the fear that I should be uncomfortable at the château, had alone prevented Horace from taking me with him. She knew better than any one how much he loved me—her to whom he had confided everything at first before marriage, and who so often since had thanked her for the great happiness she had conferred upon him in bringing us together. The certainty that Horace really loved me, determined me at once to join him. I therefore resolved if the next conveyance did not bring Horace, that I should myself go to see him.

"I received a letter. Horace, far from thinking of returning, stated that he was compelled to remain six weeks or two months longer far from me. His letter was full of protestations of love. He had made engagements with his friends which prevented his return. He was certain that I should be frightened with the old ruins, and wished me on no account to rejoin him. If I hesitated before, this letter decided it. I went down to my mother and told her that Horace

authorized me to rejoin him, and that I should set out the following evening. She absolutely wished to go with me, and I had the greatest difficulty in the world in making her understand, that if she had any fears for me, she had much greater reason to fear for herself.

"I travelled post, taking with me my maid, who came originally from Normandy. When we arrived at St. Laurent-du-Mont, she asked me if I would allow her to visit her relations for three or four days, as they lived at Crèvecour. I granted her request, without thinking that it was especially at present that I should require her services, when going into a house inhabited by gentlemen. Still I also thought that I ought to give Horace proof that he was wrong to doubt my stoicism.

"I arrived at Caen about seven o'clock in the evening. The postmaster, learning that a lady who travelled alone wanted horses to go to the Château de Burcy, came out himself to the door of my carriage: he insisted so vehemently that I should pass the night in the city, and not continue my route till the next day that I yielded. I would arrive, therefore, at the château at an early hour when every one would be asleep, and

perhaps, thanks to the events of which I was one of the leading actors, the doors would be closed, and I might not be able to get in. This motive, more than fear, determined me to remain at the hotel.

"The evenings were beginning to be cold. I entered into the room of the postmaster whilst my chamber was being prepared. Then the hostess, so as to cause me no regret for the resolution I had taken and the delay caused by it, related to me all that had taken place in the neighbourhood for the last fortnight or three weeks. Terror was in every dwelling, and no one dared to go a quarter of a league from the city after sunset.

"I passed a dreadful night. The nearer I drew towards the château the more I lost my courage. Perhaps the count had had other reasons to separate from me, than those he had mentioned. How would he receive me on my arrival, sudden and unexpected as it was. It was a disobedience of his orders, an infringement of his authority. The impatient gesture which he had been unable to restrain, the first, the only one, that he had ever allowed to escape him—did it not clearly prove a resolution firmly resolved upon? For an

instant I thought of writing to him, stating that I was in Caen, and only waited for him to seek me. But all these fears, inspired and sustained by a feverish night, disappeared after a few hours' sleep, and in the clear morning my courage returned, I ordered the horses, and ten minutes afterwards I was again on my journey.

"It was nine o'clock in the morning when the postilion stopped about two leagues from Buisson, to point out to me the Château de Burcy, where you could see the park, which was within two hundred yards of the main road.

"We arrived soon after, and found the gate shut. We rang the bell several times before any one appeared, and I began to blame myself for not having previously announced my arrival. Could the count and his friends have gone out hunting? In that case what would become of me at this solitary château, which I could not enter myself or get any one else to open? Should I be compelled to wait in some miserable cottage until they returned? Impossible.

"At last, in my impatience, I got out of the carriage and rang loudly myself. A living being soon appeared coming through the shrubbery. I recognized the Malay, and beckoned to him to

make haste; he opened the gate for me, and I found myself in the domain.

"I did not take the trouble to get into the carriage again, but strolled on. Soon I perceived the château, which at the first glance appeared in good order. I entered the house, walked into the antechamber, and could distinctly hear voices. I pushed open a door which opened into the dining-room, and again was face to face with Horace, who was at breakfast with Henry: each had at his right hand a pair of pistols on the table.

"When the count perceived me, he rose from his chair and became pale, fearing that something had gone wrong. I trembled so much that I had only strength to open my arms to him; and seeing me about to fall, he ran to me and prevented me.

"'Horace,' said I, 'forgive me; I have disobeyed you.'

"'You have done wrong,' said he in a dull voice.

"'Oh, if you wish it,' cried I, alarmed at his manner, 'I will return this instant; I have seen you once more, and that is all that I wanted.'

"'No!' replied the count, 'certainly not.

Now that you are here, remain. Remain and be welcome.'

"At these words he embraced me, and making an effort himself, he resumed that cold, calm appearance, which frightened me more than when his countenance was irritated."

CHAPTER XI.

"In the mean time, by degrees this veil of ice which the count seemed to have drawn over his face melted. He conducted me to the apartment arranged for me, which was entirely furnished after the style of Louis XV.

"'Yes, I know it!' I exclaimed; 'this is the one by which I entered. Oh, *mon Dieu!* I begin to understand all.' Then I resumed, as it were, to myself, 'He asks pardon of me for his cold reception; but the surprise which my unexpected arrival gave him, the fear of the privations I should undergo during a sojourn of two months in this old mansion, had been too much for him. However, as I have braved all, all is well, and he will try to render my visit to the château as little disagreeable as possible. Unfortunately he has for to-day or to-morrow to put off a hunting-party, and he will be obliged, perhaps, to leave me for a day or two; but he must understand that he is perfectly free, that I have not

come there to interfere with his pleasures, but to reassure my heart, alarmed on his account by the recitals of so many murders.'

"The count smiled.

"I was so fatigued with the journey that I lay down and slept. At two o'clock the count returned, and entering my bedchamber, asked me if I would like a sail in his boat as the day was beautiful. I replied, 'Exceedingly.'

"We went into the park, through which the Orne flowed. On one of the banks of this little river a beautiful boat was moored. Its shape was long and foreign-looking. Horace told me that it was built after the model of the Japanese boats, and that this kind of construction increased greatly its speed. We embarked, Horace, Henry, and I. The Malay took the oar, and we moved away rapidly, assisted by the current. When we got out to sea, Horace and Henry unfurled the triangular sail, and without the assistance of oars we sailed with extraordinary rapidity.

"I had never seen the ocean before. This magnificent sight so completely absorbed me, that I did not perceive a small boat which made signals to us; I was only drawn from my reverie by the voice of Horace, who hailed one of the men in this boat.

"'Boat ahoy!' he exclaimed. 'What news have you from Havre?'

"'Not much,' replied a voice which was known to me—'and at Burcy?'

"'You see, my friend, with us an unexpected companion—an old friend of yours, Madame de Beuzeval, my wife.'

"'O, what!' cried Max; 'Madame de Beuzeval, whom I used to know!'

"'The same! and if you have any doubt of it, old fellow, come on board and present yourself to her.'

"The boat came alongside—Max, with two sailors, was in it. He was dressed in a handsome sailor's dress, and on his shoulder he carried a net ready to cast into the sea. We exchanged some pleasant conversation, and then Max, after he had dropped his net into the sea, came on board our canoe, spoke a few words in an undertone with Henry, bowed to me, and again went back to his own boat.

"'Good fishing to you,' said Horace.

"'Good voyage,' answered Max, and the boats separated.

"Dinner-hour approached, and we regained the mouth of the river; but the tide had ebbed, and

there was no longer water enough to bring us up to the park; we were obliged to go on shore and mount the heights.

"I then took the same way that you yourself took three or four nights afterwards. I found myself first amongst the flints, then the long grass; at last I got to the top of the hill, and entering the abbey, I saw the cloister and its little cemetery. I followed the corridor, and on the other side of a thick shrubbery I was once more within the park of the château.

"The evening passed without anything worthy of notice. Horace was very lively, and spoke of the embellishments of our house for next winter, and of our travels in spring. He intended to take my mother and myself to Italy, and perhaps purchase one of those old marble palaces in Venice, so as to enjoy the season of the Carnival. Henry was by no means in such good spirits, and appeared pre-occupied and startled at the slightest noise. All these details, to which I scarcely paid any attention at that moment, reappeared later to my memory with all their causes; and although hidden from me then, their effects made me understand them afterwards.

"We retired, leaving Henry in the dining-room.

He had to sit up to write, he told us, and taking his writing materials, he sat close to the fire.

"Next morning, when we were at breakfast, the bell at the park-gate rang in a peculiar manner. 'Max!' both Horace and Henry exclaimed at once. It was really he whom they had named, and who arrived at the château with his horse at full gallop.

"'Ah, hah! returned,' said Horace, laughing. 'I am delighted to see you again; another time be more careful of my horses—look at the state in which you have brought home poor Pluto.'

"'I was afraid of not arriving in time,' replied Max; then hesitating and coming towards me he said, 'Madam, excuse me for appearing before you booted and spurred, but Horace has forgotten, I think, that we have a course to run to-day with some English people,' he continued, dwelling on the words; 'they arrived last evening special by the steamboat; and as we are all ready, we must not break our words by being too late.'

"'Very well,' remarked Horace; 'we shall be there.'

"'In the mean time,' continued Max, coming again beside me, 'I know not why we should keep you to your promise—this hunt is too fatiguing for you to accompany us.'

"'Oh! gentlemen, make yourselves quite easy,' I forced myself to reply, 'I have not come here to be a clog upon your amusements. Go; and in your absence I will guard the fortress.'

"'You see,' said Horace, 'Pauline is a true constable of the olden time; she only requires pursuivants and pages, for she has not even a lady's-maid; hers has remained on the road, and will not be here for a week.'

"'Well,' exclaimed Henry, 'if you wish to remain at the château, Horace, we will excuse you to our Islanders—nothing more easy.'

"'Most assuredly not,' he replied. 'You must be well aware that the wager is mine. It is necessary, then, that I should be present. I have told you that Pauline will excuse us.'

"'Completely,' I answered; 'for in giving you all freedom to go, I shall retire to my chamber.'

"'I shall rejoin you there immediately,' the count replied; and with polished gallantry he conducted me to the door, and kissed my hand.

"I entered my bedroom, and in a very short time Horace followed me there. Already he was attired in hunting costume, and came to say adieu to me. I went down stairs again with him, even to the stone steps outside the château, and I

took leave also of his friends. Again they implored Horace to remain with me, but I would not hear of it; they all departed, promising me to return the following evening.

"I was left alone with the Malay at the château. This singular society would perhaps have alarmed any other woman except myself, but I knew that this man was devoted to my husband, since the day he had seen him attack the tigress in the bamboos. Subdued by this powerful admiration of courage which primitive races have, he had followed Horace from Bombay to France, and had never left him for a day. I had, then, every reason to feel easy, but for his savage air and his foreign costume; still I was in a part of the country which for some time had become the theatre of the most unheard-of events, and although I had never heard either Horace or Henry, who slighted, or affected to slight similar dangers, speak of these sanguinary crimes, yet they recurred to my memory when I was alone. As I had nothing to fear during the day, I walked in the park, and resolved to visit the environs of the château which I was to inhabit for two months.

"My steps were directed naturally towards the part which I already knew. I again visited the

ruins of the abbey more carefully; but as you have explored them, I need not say more. I went out by the ruined porch and soon arrived at the hill which is close to the beach.

"This was the second time that I had seen the sea. It had lost nothing of its power upon my astonished feelings, so much so, that for two long hours I sat motionless contemplating it. At the end of this time I left with regret, but I wished to visit the other parts of the park. I went towards the river, and for some time followed its banks; I saw again the boat in which we had sailed the evening before, moored to the bank, and it appeared to me as if it was made ready to start at any time. It recalled to my mind, I know not why, the horse always saddled in the stable.

"This idea of course suggested another; it was this never-ceasing defiance which Horace and his friends equally considered necessary—those pistols which never left the head of the bed, and were on the table when I arrived. It appeared to me that whilst they were always laughing at danger, they took every precaution against it. Still, if two men could not breakfast together without arms by their side, how could

they leave alone at the château me, who had no defence? All this was incomprehensible. Yet, notwithstanding every effort that I made to drive away these suspicions from my heart, they invariably returned.

"But now, still reflecting as I walked on, I strayed into the thickest part of the wood. There, surrounded by a forest of oaks, was a pavilion, isolated and perfectly concealed. I went round it, but the door and shutters were so ingeniously fitted, that in spite of my curiosity, I could see nothing except the exterior. I promised myself that the first time I went out with Horace, we should come to this place; for I had already, if the count offered no objection, claimed a right to this pavilion, and to take my work there; its position rendering it admirable for that purpose.

"I returned to the château. After exploring the exterior, I must try the interior. My chamber was between the drawing-room and the library. There was a corridor from one end of the building to the other, and it connected both. My apartment was the most complete; the remainder of the château was divided into a dozen of small separate rooms, composed of

antechambers, dressing-rooms, &c.; all were very habitable, in spite of what the count wrote to me.

"As the library appeared to me the best antidote against solitude, and the *ennui* which awaited me, I resolved immediately to acquaint myself with its resources; it was composed in a great measure of the romances of the 18th century, which showed that the count's ancestors had a decided taste for the literature of Voltaire, Crebillon the younger, and Marivaux. Some of the more recently published volumes which appeared to have been bought by the present proprietor, did not improve the appearance of the library, as they were much used. They consisted of works on chemistry, history, and travels. Amongst the last I observed a beautiful English edition of 'Daniel's India,' and resolving to make it my companion for the night, I took a volume from the shelf and brought it with me to my bedroom.

"Five minutes afterwards the Malay came and announced to me by signs that dinner was served. I went down and found the table laid out in the immense dining-room. I cannot describe to you the feeling of fear and sadness

that came over me, when I found myself compelled to dine alone, with two candles which could not dispel the darkness of the room, but allowed shadows to be given to objects of the most fantastic description. This feeling was still further increased, by the presence of this swarthy servant, to whom I could only make known my wants by signals; but he obeyed me with a promptitude and an intelligence which made more fantastic still this strange repast. Often I was anxious to speak to him, although I knew he could not understand me, but as children dare not cry in darkness, I was afraid to hear my own voice. After he had served the desert, I made a sign to him to make a large fire in my room. The blaze of the fire is company to those who have no other, and I reckoned upon going to sleep at a late hour, for I experienced a sensation of fear, which during the day never occurred to me, but it was greatly increased by the darkness coming on.

"When I was again alone in this large dining-room, my terror was dreadful. I fancied the white window-curtains moved about like white sheets; but it was not the fear of the dead which agitated me—the monks and the clergy

whose tombs I had walked over, slept in blessed sleep, some in their cloister, the others in their vaults; but all that I had read in the country, all that I had heard at Caen, rushed to my memory, and I was startled at the slightest noise. I heard none, however, except the rustling of the leaves, the far-off murmur of the ocean, and the dull melancholy sound of the wind. I remained motionless for nearly ten minutes, not daring to look either to the right or to the left, when I heard a slight movement behind me. I turned round, it was the Malay. He crossed his hands upon his chest and bowed; this was the manner of informing me that the orders I had given him were accomplished. I arose; he took the candles and walked before me; my apartment having been perfectly prepared for the night by my singular waiting-maid, who placed the lights upon a table, and then left me—I was alone!

"My wishes had been completely fulfilled; a blazing fire burned in the large chimney of white marble, supported by gilt cupids; the fire lighted up the room and gave it a lively appearance, which contrasted so well with my fears, that they began to pass away. This room was hung with red damask, flowered. The ceiling

and doors were ornamented with groups of arabesques and scrolls, one more fantastic than another, representing the dances of fawns and satyrs, whose grotesque faces laughed with a golden tint, which the hearth reflected.

"I had not determined at what hour I should retire to rest; it was not yet eight o'clock. I simply put on a peignoir over my dress, and as I noticed that the weather was lovely, I wished to open my window, so as to be able to reassure myself by the view, calm and serene, of nature asleep; but I suppose, in consequence of the reports of the assassinations in the neighbourhood, the shutters were firmly closed within. I then went and ensconced myself by the side of the fire, prepared myself to read the 'Travels in India,' when, on looking at the book, I found that by mistake I had brought with me the second instead of the first volume. I got up to bring the first volume from the library, when, on approaching it, my fear returned. I hesitated for a moment; then I felt ashamed of my childish weakness, and I boldly opened the door, and went to the shelf where I found the book.

"When I directed the candle towards the place from which I took the wrong volume, I saw

behind the empty space, on the shelf, a brass bolt or button, similar to what they place on locks for doors, and which was hidden from the eye by the books arranged before a panel or door. I had often seen secret doors in libraries, which were arranged by false bindings to represent real books. Nothing was more natural than that a door of the same description opened out somewhere. The direction in which it was placed rendered it almost impossible, as the windows of the library were at the very end of the building.

"I endeavoured by examining with the assistance of my light, to find out some indication of an aperture, but after a rigid search I saw nothing. I tried to turn the bolt, but it resisted. I used more force, and felt it yield, till by perseverance a door opened suddenly, and returned with a spring back to me, disclosing a circular staircase inserted in the thickness of the wall.

"You can readily understand that such a discovery was not likely to calm me. I directed my light to the bottom of the staircase, and I saw that it was perpendicular. For a moment I wished to ascertain more correctly, but after descending two steps my heart failed me, and I

re-entered the library, pushing back the secret door, which closed so hermetically that, even with the knowledge that it existed, I could not discover its jointings. I replaced the volume for fear that they might see that I had touched it, for how could I know who was interested in the secret. I took by chance some other work, and having turned the bolt of the secret door, I again found myself in my bedroom, seated by the fire.

"Unexpected events acquire or lose their gravity just as our spirits are gay or sad, or just as the circumstances in which we find ourselves are less critical. Certainly nothing is more natural than a secret door in a library, or a staircase built in a wall; but if we discover this door and this staircase at night, in an isolated château which we inhabit alone and defenceless,—if this château is built in a country which rings every day with the news of some new robbery and murder,—if a mysterious destiny completely envelopes you for some time,—if ominous presentiments take possession of you twenty times in the midst of a ball, a mortal shivering at your heart,—all then becomes if not reality, at least painful imagination, and no one is ignorant by experience, that danger which you cannot see, is a thousand times more

striking and terrible than visible and material peril.

"Now, I regretted bitterly the imprudent leave I had given to my servant. Fear is so unreasonable that it excites or calms us, without any apparent motives. The weakest being, a dog which we caress, a child who smiles upon us, although neither one or other can defend us, are, in cases like mine, some heart-helps, even without weapons. If I had had near me this girl, who had not left me for five years, whose devotedness and friendship I well knew, without doubt all these fears would have disappeared, whilst now that I was alone, it appeared to me that I was sacrified from the first, and that nothing could save me.

"I remained perfectly still for two hours; the cold perspiration of fear moistened my forehead, and I heard the clock strike ten—eleven o'clock. At this sound so natural, I felt myself each time laying hold of the arms of my chair. Between eleven and half-past eleven, I thought I heard the report of a pistol some distance off; I half raised myself, leaning on the chimneypiece; then everything returned to its tomb-like silence, and I reclined on the sofa with my eyes turned

towards the back of it. I remained in this position for some time, my eyes fixed upon one point, and not daring to look at any other, for fear of meeting some real cause of fright in some other direction.

"Suddenly, in the midst of this absolute silence, I heard the park gate grate on its hinges. The idea that Horace had returned drove away in an instant all my fear, and I rushed towards the window, forgetting that my shutters were closed. I wished to open the door of the corridor, but whether by awkwardness or as a precaution, the Malay had closed it when he left me. I was a prisoner!

"I recollected in a moment that the windows of the library looked, like those of my own chamber, upon the lawn. I turned the lock, and by one of those odd movements which causes either the greatest courage or the greatest cowardice to succeed, I entered without a light; for those who came at this time of night could neither be Horace nor his friends, and my candle denounced my chamber as inhabited. The shutters in the library had only been pushed together. I opened one, and by the moonlight I distinctly saw a man open one of the sides of the gate, which faced the

hall door of the château, and hold it ajar, whilst two others, whom I could not distinguish, rushed through the gate, which their companion closed behind them.

"The three men did not approach the vestibule, but turned aside, leaving the château to the left. In the mean time, by the path they took, they came close to my side of the house, and I was soon enabled to make out the form of the burden which they brought with them. It was a body enveloped in a cloak, and no doubt the sight of an inhabited mansion gave hope to him or her who was brought in. There was a great struggling immediately under my window; and during this struggle, I saw an arm show itself, covered with the sleeve of a woman's dress. I had now no doubt of the victim being a female. But all passed as quick as lightning. The arm, instantaneously and vigorously seized by one of the three men, disappeared under the cloak. The object again appeared a shapeless sort of burden; then all disappeared round a corner of the house facing an avenue of chestnuts, which led to the pavilion, which I discovered the same evening in the midst of the massive oaks.

"I was totally unable to recognize these men;

all that I could distinguish about them was their peasant garb. But if they were what they appeared to be, how or why came they to the château? How did they obtain the key of the gate? Was it a case of rapine or murder? I did not know, but it was either the one or the other. Everything appeared to me so strange, so incomprehensible, that I occasionally fancied myself under the influence of a dream.

"Not a sound was heard again. The calm, beautiful night ran on her course, and I remained within the window of the library unnerved with terror. I dared not leave the spot I had selected, to acquaint myself with the cause of my fears, lest the very sound of my footsteps might awake some new danger, if there were any which threatened me.

"I thought of the secret door and the concealed staircase. I imagined that I heard a dull sound from that side of the château as I went quickly into my bedroom, and closed and bolted the door. I sat down in my chair without remarking that during my absence one of the candles had gone out.

"There was an end now of what is called imaginary fear. I had seen with my own eyes that

some real crime had been committed, and that the perpetrators of it had brought the very evidence of it to the château. I expected every moment that some panel would slide away, or that I should see some hidden door open. Every little sound so distinctly heard during the night, such as the creaking of the joints of furniture or wainscots, made me feel so nervous and terrified, that I heard my heart beat as regularly as the pendulum of the clock. At this moment my candle was just going out, when the paper which surrounded the end of it blazed up. A momentary light illuminated the whole room, gradually decreasing with a crackling noise for a second or two; then the wick burying itself in the bottom of the candlestick, left me all at once with no other light than that of the fire.

"I looked about me, hoping to find some wood to make it up again; I could not find any. I heaped up the brands that were in the grate one on the top of another, and for a short time the fire looked cheerful, but its trembling flame was not a light sufficient to reassure me; every object had become as unsteady as the new light of the flickering blaze which reflected itself upon them. Doors seemed to be balancing themselves, cur-

tains seemed to be uneasy, and long shadows appeared hovering about upon the ceiling and the carpet. I began to feel sick, and was only prevented from fainting by pure fear.

"At this moment I heard the little pioneer which heralds the striking of the clock. I waited, then counted the strokes—it was midnight.

"I had not the courage to pass the night in my chair. I felt the cold gradually creeping over me as the fire went out. I then resolved to sleep dressed as I was, to be ready for any emergency, and I went to bed without daring to look around me. I slipped under the clothes, and without making any noise drew the counterpane over my head.

"I remained for an hour in this state of mind without, of course, the possibility of sleep. I shall remember that hour during my whole life. A spider wove his net in the shrubs of the alcove, and I listened to the incessant spinning of this nocturnal workman. All at once it ceased, interrupted by another sound which exactly resembled the noise I had made, when I turned the copper bolt in the door of the library. I raised my head quickly from under the coverlet, and with outstretched neck, retaining my breath, my

hand upon my heart to keep down its palpitation, I drew my breath and doubted still. Soon, alas! I doubted no longer.

"I had not deceived myself. The floor shook under the weight of some one; as the footsteps approached, I heard a chair overturned; from the noise caused by this circumstance I could easily understand why the most absolute silence immediately succeeded. The spider even resumed his web. Oh! these details,—all these details,—they are present to my memory as if I were still there, lying in that bed in the agony of the greatest terror.

"Again I heard footsteps in the library. This time they came close to the wainscot at the head of my bed, and *I felt* a hand leaning against the partition. I was only separated from it by a thin partition. I thought that I heard a panel slide. I remained still as death, as if asleep, for sleep was my only weapon, and the thief, if it really were one, knowing that I could neither see nor hear, might spare my life, judging wisely that it was useless. My face turned towards the wall, was in the shade, so that I could keep my eyes open. Then I saw my curtains move, a hand separating them gently; then, framed as it were

like a picture by the red drapery, a pale head protruded. The last flickering light of the fire at the bottom of the alcove lighted up this apparition. I recognized Count Horace, and I closed my eyes!

"When I opened them again the vision had disappeared, although my curtains were still moving; I heard the grating sound of the panel which closed upon him; then the reverberation of his footsteps growing gradually less distinct; then the noise of the door in the library. At last everything became tranquil and silent. I cannot remember how long I remained breathless, and afraid to move; but about daybreak, crushed by this dreadful night, I fell into a torpor which resembled sleep."

CHAPTER XII.

"I was awoke by the Malay, who knocked at my door, which I had bolted; and as I told you I had retired to bed in my clothes, I got up immediately, and told him to come in. The servant opened the blind, and I was relieved by seeing the sun and the broad daylight brightening my chamber.

"It was one of those beautiful autumnal mornings, when the sky, before covering itself with clouds, gives a last smile upon earth. All was so calm, so motionless in the park, that I even began to doubt myself. Nevertheless, the events of last night still held a strong possession over my heart; for the very locality under my eye recalled the slightest details. I saw again the iron gate which was opened to admit the three men and this woman, the path that they had taken, and the very footprints, were marked on the gravel at the place where the poor creature had struggled with violence to free herself; then

these marks followed the direction I have spoken of before, and disappeared amongst the lime-trees. I still wished to find out some new evidence to strengthen my convictions—some more proofs to add to them. I entered the library; the blind was half open, just as I had left it. A chair overturned in the middle of the room confirmed the impression that I had heard one fall. I approached close to the panel, and looking at it with the most intense interest, I discerned the almost imperceptible groove on which it moved; I tried my hand on the moulding—it gave way. Just at this moment I heard the door of my bedroom opened, and I had only time to replace the panel and seize a book in the library.

"It was the Malay. He came to inform me that breakfast was ready, and I followed him.

"On entering the dining-room I almost started back with surprise. I expected to find Horace; but not only was he not there, but only one cover was laid.

"'The count is not returned?' said I.

"The Malay made a sign in the negative.

"'No!' murmured I, almost stupefied, and he again replied by a gesture.

"I fell back in my chair and buried myself in

thought. The count had not returned; nevertheless, I had seen him at my bedside, he moved my curtains one hour after I had seen those three men. Those three men! Might they not be the count and his two friends, Horace, Max, and Henry, who brought in this woman? They alone could have the key of the park-gate after all, to enter so easily, and without causing any intimation. I had no doubt of it.

"This was, then, one reason why the count did not wish me to come to the château; another reason why he received me so coldly; another reason why he made it a pretext for hunting. The abduction of this lady had been delayed by my arrival; but afterwards it had been accomplished. Horace loved me no longer, he loved another, and the woman he loved was at the present moment in the château—in the pavilion, no doubt, I exclaimed bitterly. Yes; and the count, to make sure that I had neither seen nor heard anything, that I was at last without doubts or suspicions, had come up the private staircase of the library, had pushed aside the panel or wainscot, had opened the curtains of my bed, and, certain that I slept, had returned to the new object of his love.

"Everything explained itself to me, I thought, as plainly and as precisely as if I had seen it. In an instant my jealousy had cleared the obscurity, and these mysteries were solved. I had nothing more to know, and hurried out of the house choking with anger.

"They had already raked away the footprints in the avenue, and I walked on through the lime-trees until I arrived at the oaks, near which the pavilion was situated. I turned round on seeing that it was shut up and apparently inhabited. I returned to the château; retiring to my bedroom, I sat down in the arm-chair, in which the night before I had passed so many painful hours. I now felt in the daylight astonished at my previous terror; it was, perhaps, the gloom or the darkness, or, rather, the absence of strong excitement which made me then such a coward.

"I passed a portion of the day in walking up and down my room, opening and shutting the window, waiting for night with as much impatience as the evening before I was afraid of seeing it approach. They came to announce dinner, and I went down; still there was the single cover, but close to it a letter. I recognized in a moment the writing of Horace, and with much expectation broke the seal.

"He excused himself for leaving me two days alone; but he had not been able to return, he had pledged his word before my arrival, and was obliged to keep it, although it had cost him much grief. I crushed the letter between my hands without finishing it, and threw it into the fire. I forced myself to eat, to prevent any suspicion of the Malay, and after dinner went up to my bedroom.

"My request of the night before was not forgotten, for I found a large fire when I entered my chamber; but this did not now for a moment occupy my thoughts—I had something else to think of, a plan to arrange, and I sat myself down to reflect. The fright of the previous evening had not only disappeared for the moment, but was entirely forgotten. So much for jealousy.

"Count Horace and his friends had re-entered by the iron gate. I knew these men to be him and them. They had conducted this female to the pavilion; then the count had taken off his peasant costume, to assure himself that I still slept soundly, and that I had neither heard nor seen anything. I had only to do as he did, viz., to follow the staircase, and then I should go to

the same place from which he came. I decided to go by the staircase.

"I looked at the timepiece, which pointed to a quarter past eight. I went to my shutters, they were not closed, and I felt, without doubt, that there was not much to be seen this night, as the precautions of the previous evening had not been taken. I opened the window.

"The night was stormy; I heard thunder in the distance, and the noise of the sea, which broke upon the shore, appeared close to me. In my heart was a storm more terrible than Nature's; my thoughts dashed against my head darker and more impulsive than the waves of the ocean. Two hours passed away without my moving, without my eyes leaving a small statue hidden amongst the trees; it is true that I did not see it.

"At last I thought my hour had come. I I heard not a sound in the château; the same rain which, during the evening of the 27th September, made you seek a tree in the ruins, began to fall in torrents. I put out my head for a moment to catch a few drops, and then I withdrew it, fastening the window and closing the shutters.

"I left my room on my fearful expedition, and advanced a few steps into the corridor without

hearing the slightest noise. The Malay either slept, or was in attendance upon his master in some other part of the house. I returned, and bolted the door of my chamber. It was now half past ten, and not a sound was heard except the storm without; its noise enabled me to conceal what I intended to do. I took my candle and went to the door of the library. It was locked!

"They had seen me there in the morning, and feared that I had discovered the staircase. They had closed it, but fortunately the count had been at the trouble of showing me another way.

"I tried the back of my bed, I pressed the movable moulding, the wainscot moved aside, and I was once more in the library.

"I went straight to the hidden door, with a firm step and without hesitation. I removed the book which concealed the bolt, and pushing the spring, the door opened.

"I was now upon the staircase, which was only wide enough for one, and I descended three flights of steps; at every one of them I listened, but not a sound reached me.

'I soon reached a sort of vault, which de-

scended abruptly in almost a straight line. I continued along this outlet for nearly five minutes, when I found a third door, which, like the second, offered no resistance, but opened upon another staircase similar to that of the library, but it had only two stories. From thence I went through another door, and on opening it I heard the sound of voices. I extinguished my candle and placed it on the last step; then I glided through the opening, and found myself in a sort of ill-lighted chemical laboratory; the light of the next room alone contributed to it by a skylight covered with a green blind. The windows were so carefully closed that the daylight was completely shut out.

'I was not wrong in imagining that I heard people talking, for the conversation was noisy in the adjoining chamber, and I recognized the voices of the count and his friends. I mounted upon a chair, and saw plainly into the room they occupied.

"Count Horace, Max, and Henry were at table, although the debauch was drawing to an end. The Malay waited upon them, and stood behind the count's chair. The guests were clothed in blue blouzes; attached to the belt of each was a

hunting-knife and a pair of pistols ready to their hand. Horace rose as if to go out.

"'Already,' said Max.

"'Why do you wish me to remain here?' answered the Count de Beuzeval.

"'Drink,' said Henry, raising his glass.

"'The great pleasure of drinking with you,' replied the count, 'is, that at the third bottle you are as drunk as a porter.'

"'Let us play.'

"'I am not a pickpocket, to gain your money when you are not in a fit state to prevent me from winning it,' said the count, raising his shoulders and turning half round.

"'Well, never mind, let us pay court to our beautiful Englishwoman; your servant has arranged that she is in a good temper. Upon my word he knows what he is about—— Now, my friend.'

"Max gave the Malay a handful of gold.

"'Generous as a thief,' said the count.

"'Let us see,' replied Max rising, 'let us see; for that is no answer. Do you wish the Englishwoman or do you not?'

"'I do not.'

" ' Then I take her.'

" ' One moment,' cried Henry, stretching forth his hand. ' I think I am something or some one here, and that I have the same rights as any one else. Who killed her husband?'

" ' That is gone by,' said the count laughing.

" I heard a groan at this horrible speech. I turned my eyes to the spot from whence it came. A female was stretched on a sort of four-posted bed with a canopy over it; my attention had been so completely absorbed by other events that I had not noticed her before.

" ' Yes,' continued Max; ' but who waited for them at Havre? who came here express to caution you?'

" ' The devil!' exclaimed the count, ' it is now becoming embarrassing. King Solomon himself could only decide in this case between the spy and the murderer.'

" A long and angry discussion took place between Max and Henry, which I dare not relate to you, because both, having drunk too much, indulged in the most disgusting conversation as to who should be the new husband of the poor lady whose husband they had murdered.

Horace, in the purest English spoke to her, but all she asked was 'to have pity upon her and kill her.'

"At this moment, Max and Henry, heated by wine, approached each other, and, influenced by the same desire, looked at each other with anger. Then each retired a step or two, drew his hunting-knife, and again faced each other.

"'In the name of Heaven kill me,' again cried out the poor lady. 'For pity's sake put an end to this misery.'

"'What do you mean, both of you?' exclaimed Horace, who still seated, addressed them with the commanding tone of a master.

"'I have said,' warmly replied Max, in giving Henry a blow, 'that this woman is mine.'

"'And I,' replied Henry, following up his adversary with equal vigour; 'say that she is mine, not his. I shall maintain what I have said.'

"'You have both lied,' said Horace; 'neither one nor other of you shall have her.'

"Before he had uttered the last words, he took a pistol from the table, and raising it slowly in the direction of the bed, he fired. The ball

passed between the two combatants and lodged itself in the lady's heart. At this awful sight I cried out, and fell fainting, apparently as dead as she who had just been murdered."

CHAPTER XIII.

"When I came to my senses, I was in the vault. The count, guided by my shriek and the noise of my fall, had no doubt found me in the laboratory, and taking advantage of the swoon in which I lay several hours, had brought me into that tomb. Beside me on a stone, were a lamp, a tumbler, and a letter. The glass contained poison, the letter I will read to you."

"Do you hesitate to show it to me?" cried I "and have you only half confidence in me?"

"I have burnt it," said Pauline; but calm yourself, I have not forgotten one word of it. Listen:

"'You have willed that the course of my crimes should be complete. You have seen all, heard all. I have nothing more for you to learn. You know who I am, — or rather what I am. If the secret which you now know belonged to

me alone,—if no other life than mine was at stake, I would rather sacrifice it, than a hair of your head should fall. I swear it, Pauline. But an involuntary indiscretion, a sign of fear escaping from your memory, a word dropped in your dreams, might convey not only me, but also two other men to the scaffold. Your death assures three lives. Therefore, you must die. I had the idea of depriving you of life when you fainted, but I had not the courage, for you are the only woman I ever loved, Pauline. If you had followed my advice, or rather obeyed my orders, at this hour you would be with your mother. You came to me—it was only your destiny. You will awake in this vault where no one has descended for twenty years, and into which, perhaps, for twenty years to come no one else will descend.

"'Have no hope of succour, it would be useless. You will find near this letter, poison; for all that I can do for you is to offer you a speedy and easy death, instead of slow and painful agony. In any case, and whatever you may do, remember that from this hour you are dead! No one has seen you, no one knows you. This woman, whom I killed to settle the dispute

between Max and Henry, will be placed in a shroud in your place and taken back to Paris, to the burial-place of your own family; your mother will weep over her, believing that she is weeping over her own child.

"'Adieu, Pauline. I neither ask oblivion or mercy from you; for a long time I have been accursed, and your pardon would not save me.'"

"The atrocious villain!" cried I. "Oh, *mon Dieu*, how you must have suffered!"

"Yes," said Pauline; "even all that I have left to relate, will only be my agony. Let me go on.

"I read this letter, then, two or three times. I could not believe in its reality. There are some things at which reason absolutely revolts. You have them before you, under your hand, your eyes; you touch them, you see them, but still you do not believe in them. I went in silence to the entrance of the vault, it was shut. I walked two or three times in silence round it, striking the damp walls with my clenched hand, still incredulous. I then returned and seated myself in silence in the corner of my tomb. I was then really closed up. By the light of the lamp, I saw well the

letter and the poison; yet I still doubted. I said to myself as they say of dreamers, 'I sleep, but I shall awake.'

"I remained in this position immovable, until my light began to show symptoms of going out; a frightful thought took possession of me all at once, which until then had not occurred to me. I shrieked almost with terror, as the lamp was expiring. I went towards it, and saw that the oil was all but gone. In the darkness I should commence my apprenticeship of death.

"Oh, what would I not have given to have had some oil to pour into this lamp. If I could have kept it burning with my blood, I would have opened my veins with my teeth. It still flickered; but every moment its light became more dim, and the circle of darkness which appeared at a distance, when it was shining brightly, now gradually approached me. I was close to it on my knees, with clasped hands. I did not think of praying to God, I prayed to it—It.

"At last it began to struggle against the darkness, as I myself was soon about to struggle against death. Perhaps I animated it with my own thoughts, for it appeared to me as if it clung

to life, and that it trembled in giving up that light which was its soul. Soon its agony arrived with all its phases. It had occasional glimmerings, as the deathbed exhibits some signs of strength. It cast its transparence farther than it had ever done, like the delirious, who see sometimes beyond the limits assigned to human life. The languor of exhaustion succeeded, and the flame wavered as the last sigh trembles upon the lips of the dying. At last it did go out, taking with it its brightness which is the half of life.

"I went back to the corner of my dungeon, and from that moment I no longer doubted; for, strange to say, after the light went out, and I could not see either letter or poison, *I knew* they were there.

"So clearly had I seen, that I paid no attention to the silence; but from the time the lamp was extinguished, it weighed down my heart with all the weight of darkness. In fact, everything was so death-like and so still, that if I could have been heard I would have hesitated before calling out.

"A most strange thing, it appears to me now, was that the approach of death had almost made me forget the cause of it. I thought of my situation, I was absorbed by my terror, but I can say

it, and God knows, if I did not think of pardoning him, I did not think of cursing him. Soon I began to suffer from hunger.

"I was unable to calculate the time as it rolled on, during which probably day had gone by and night had come; for when the sun reappeared, a ray, which penetrated some crack in the earth above, lighted the base of a pillar. I uttered a cry of joy, as if this ray brought me hope.

"My eyes were fixed upon it with so much perseverance, that I ended by distinguishing perfectly all the objects close to the the spot which it illuminated. There were some stones, a branch of a tree, and a tuft of moss. In returning always to the same place, this small ray had succeeded in drawing from the ground this weakly vegetation. Oh! what would I not have given to be in the place of this stone, this piece of wood, and this moss, again to see the sky once more, even through this crack in the earth.

"I began to experience a burning thirst, and to feel my thoughts wandering. Occasionally red-looking clouds passed before my eyes, and my teeth closed as they do in a nervous crisis; but still I always kept my eyes fixed upon the light.

The opening through which it entered must have been straight, for when the sun ceased to shine opposite to it, the ray became dull and hardly visible. This disappearance took away from me whatever courage I had remaining. I writhed with madness, and sobbed convulsively.

"My hunger was now changed into an acute pain in the stomach; my mouth was burning-hot, and I felt a desire to gnaw. I took one of the curls of my hair and champed it. I began to think of the poison, and I fell upon my knees with clasped hands to pray, but I had forgotten my prayers; it was impossible for me now to recollect anything except some paraphrases disjointed and unconnected. Thoughts the most opposite jostled each other at the same time in my brain; an air in the opera of '*La Gazza Ladra*' buzzed in my ears incessantly: I knew that this was the beginning of delirium, when I fell my whole length with my face to the ground.

"A stupor, caused by the emotions and the fatigue which I had undergone, took possession of me. Then commenced a series of dreams one more incoherent than the other.

"This most painful sleep, far from giving me

any comfort, had just the contrary effect. I awoke with a devouring hunger and thirst. I thought again of the poison which was close to me, and which could at any rate produce a quick, painless end. In spite of my weakness, in spite of my torpor, in spite of the low fever which shivered in my veins, I felt that death was still far off, that I must wait many hours for it, and that these most dreadful hours had not yet passed. I resolved to see once more the little ray of day which had the evening before visited me, as a consoler glides into the dungeon of a prisoner. I remained with my eyes fixed upon the spot at which it was accustomed to appear, and this expectation and preoccupation appeased a little my dreadful sufferings.

"The light so ardently looked for appeared at last. I saw it descend pale and dull; certainly this day the sun must have been clouded. Then everything which it shone upon on earth came to my memory,—those trees, those fields, that water so beautiful; Paris, which I never could see again; my mother, whom I had left for ever —my dearest mother, who had now heard of the death of her daughter, and who was at this

moment weeping over the death of her living child. At all these memories my heart almost broke; I sobbed convulsively, and burst into tears for the first time since I entered my grave. Soon, however, the paroxysm passed off, and silent tears alone remained. I had always determined to take the poison, and at this moment I did not suffer so much.

"I remained looking at the little ray as long as it gave light, but as on the previous evening, I saw it grow dimmer, and disappear entirely. I kissed my hand and said adieu to it, for I had determined not to see it again. Then I turned to myself, and endeavoured to concentrate my last and highest thoughts. During my whole life, married and unmarried, I had never been guilty of a bad action. I would die without any feeling of hatred or desire of revenge. God would then take me to Him as his child, earth I should only leave for heaven. This was the only consolation that remained to me, and I abided by it.

"I felt almost immediately that this delightful sensation not only spread itself over me but around me. I began to experience that holy enthusiasm which gave courage to the martyr.

I raised myself erect, and with head looking towards heaven, I thought that my eyes penetrated its canopy through the earth between us, and reached to the very throne of God. At this moment even my agony was compressed by a religious exaltation. I walked to the stone on which the poison was placed, as if I could see in the black darkness. I took the glass,—I listened to hear any sounds,—I looked about to see if any light appeared,—I re-read in memory the letter which told me that for twenty years no one had descended into the vault, and that another twenty might elapse before it would again be opened. I was thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of escaping from my doom; I took the tumbler of poison, I carried it to my lips, and I drank, mixing together in a last murmur of regret and hope the name of my mother whom I was leaving, and that of God whom I was about to see.

"I fell back in the corner of my tomb; my heavenly vision departed, and the veil of death spread itself betwixt it and me. Hunger and thirst again besieged me, to both were now added the effect of poison. I awaited with anxiety the cold sweat which was the precursor of death. All

at once I heard my name; I re-opened my eyes and saw a light. You were there, standing at the iron gate of my tomb. You, that I may truly call light, life, liberty. I uttered a cry, and crawled towards you. You know the rest.

"And now," continued Pauline, "I recall to you on your honour the oath you have taken, not to reveal this terrible drama so long as the three principal actors survive."

I renewed my oath.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The confidence reposed in me by Pauline, rendered her position more sacred in my eyes. I felt from this time, then, all the extent which this affection ought to acquire for her whose happiness was mine. I understood also what indelicacy there would be on my part to speak to her of this love, otherwise than by studious care, and the most respectful attentions. The plan agreed upon between us was adopted, she passed for my sister and called me brother. I obtained a promise from her, in pointing out the possibility of her being recognized by some who might have met her in Paris, to give up the idea of giving lessons in French and music. I wrote to my mother and sister that I intended to remain during a year or two in England. Pauline raised some difficulties when I told her of this decision, but when she saw that it would add to my happiness to accomplish it, she had no longer the

courage to allude to it, and this resolution settled the mutual agreement.

" Pauline hesitated a long time before deciding whether she would write to her mother and reveal her secret to her, and so being dead to all the world, she would be living to her who gave her birth. I advised her myself to do so, feebly it is true, for it would deprive me of that position of protector, which, in default of another title, made me so happy; but after reflecting upon it, to my great astonishment she gave up entirely this consolation, and after making some attempts to dive into the motive of her refusal, she refused to reveal it, pretending that it might grieve me.

" In the mean time our days passed thus: hers in a sort of melancholy which was occasionally not without its charms; mine in hope, not without happiness; for I perceived that from day to day she drew nearer to me, as it were, by all those little kindnesses, which imperceptible to herself gave me proofs, slow, but visible, of the change that was taking place in her heart. If we worked together, she at her embroidery, or I in sketching and in water-

colours, often have I noticed in looking up, that her eyes were fixed on me. When we went out together for a walk, the support she required when leaning on my arm, was at first like that of stranger to stranger, but afterwards, whether from weakness or her forlornness, I felt her lean gently on my arm. When I went out alone, almost always I could perceive her standing at the window, looking out for me towards that corner of the street which she knew I would pass. All these signs, which could simply be the consequence of greater familiarity or continual gratitude, appeared to me a revelation of happiness yet to come. I knew her regard for me from both of these circumstances, and I thanked her for it inwardly, for I feared to make it apparent to her that her heart was gradually and insensibly encouraging a friendship more than sisterly.

"I had presented my letters of introduction, and, all retired as we lived, we had occasional visitors, for we ought at the same time to avoid the busy world, and the affectation of solitude. Amongst our most intimate acquaintances, was a young physician, who in two or three years had

acquired in London a great reputation for his knowledge of certain organic diseases. Every time he came to see us, he looked at Pauline with an attention so serious, that after his departure it gave me the greatest uneasiness. In fact, that lovely complexion and freshness of youth, which before her marriage I noticed so much, and whose absence lately I attributed to suffering and want of strength, had never appeared since I found her dying in the vault; or if some tinge returned to colour momentarily her cheeks, it was only to impart to them, so long as it remained, a feverish expression more alarming than the paleness itself. It came frequently on a sudden, and without any premonitory cause or warning; it brought spasms which ended in fainting-fits, and for days afterwards a deep melancholy which she could not shake off. At last they became so frequent, and increased so much, that my misgivings were very painful, and I determined to consult our friend Dr. Sercey.

"He came the following day by chance, and as he was intently gazing upon Pauline as usual, I whispered to him to take a turn with me in the garden. We walked about the grass-plot for

some time, and at last came to the bank where I listened to Pauline's terrible history. There we sat down a moment, each of us thoughtful; I tried to break the silence, when the doctor interrupted me.

"'You are uneasy about the health of your sister,' said he to me.

"'I admit it,' I answered, 'and you yourself have allowed me to notice some uneasiness on your part, which has increased mine.'

"'You are right,' continued Dr. Sercey; 'she is threatened with a chronic disease of the stomach. Has any circumstance occurred which might have affected this organ?'

"'She has been poisoned,' said I.

"The doctor reflected for a moment.

"'Yes, that is it,' he replied quietly; 'I was not deceived. I shall prescribe a diet which she must follow with the greatest care. The moral treatment I will leave to you. You must provide amusement—distraction or absence of thinking over the past. Perhaps she wishes to return to France; a trip there would do her good.'

"'She has no wish to return to France.'

"'Well, then, you must try Ireland, Scotland,

Italy—in fact, wherever she likes; that is, I think, in her present state of health compulsory.'

"I clasped the doctor's hand as we went into the house again. The regimen he would send me privately. I determined—not to make Pauline uneasy—to substitute for our ordinary method of living what the physician prescribed; but this precaution was useless; the doctor had scarcely left the house, when Pauline took me by the hand, saying—

"'He has confessed all, has he not?'

"I appeared not to understand her, and she smiled sorrowfully.

"'Well,' continued she, 'this is the reason why I have not wished to write to my mother. Why give her back her child for a year or two, when death after that might take her away? It is enough to weep once for those we love.'

"'But,' said I, 'you are unnecessarily alarmed about your state of health. You are indisposed, and no more.'

"'Alas! it is more serious than that,' replied Pauline, with the same sweet and melancholy smile; 'and I feel that the poison has left some traces of its passage, and that I am attacked

grievously. Listen to me! I am anxious to hope, but far more, *I wish to live!* Save me a second time, Alfred. What do you wish me to do?'

"'To follow scrupulously the prescriptions of Doctor Sercey; they are easy—simple diet, but continuous and regular amusement—travelling.'

"'Where do you wish to go? I am quite ready to depart.'

"'Choose yourself the country with which you have most sympathy.'

"'Scotland, if you like it; for we are here nearly half-way.'

"'Scotland, with all my heart, dear sister, and I am glad you have selected it.'

"The preparation for our departure was soon completed, and in three days after we left London. We stopped a moment by the bank of the Tweed, to salute it with the same beautiful imprecation which Schiller put into the mouth of Mary Queen of Scots:—

"'Nature has cast the English and Scotch upon a plank in the middle of the ocean; she has divided this plank into two unequal parts, and consecrated those upon it to fight to the last for its possession. The bed of the Tweed only sepa-

rates these two irritable people, and often the blood of both mingles with its waters. Sword in hand for a thousand years they stand erect on each bank, looking at and threatening each other. Whenever an enemy oppressed England, she was sure to get help from Scotland; whenever civil war cursed Scotland, then the torch of England was sure to approach her walls. This will continue, and hatred will be implacable and eternal, until the day when the same parliament will unite the two enemies as two sisters, and when one sceptre will govern both.'

"We entered Scotland, and, Walter Scott in our hand, we visited all this poetic land, which, like a magician who conjures up phantoms, he has repeopled with its ancient inhabitants, and intermingled with them the original and charming creations of his imagination. We found once more the footprints of the good horse of the prudent Dalgetty; we passed by the lake, on which the White Lady of Avenel glided like a vapour; we seated ourselves on the ruins of the Castle of Lochleven, at the very same hour when Mary Queen of Scots herself escaped.

"This excursion will be for ever to me a dream

of happiness; for the realities of the future never once haunted me.

"Pauline had one of those organizations peculiar to artists, and without which travelling is merely a change of locality—an acceleration of the habitual movement of life, a means of distracting the imagination by the view alone of those objects which should occupy it. No historical event escaped her; no poetry of scenery, whether it exhibited itself to us in the morning's fog or the evening's twilight, was lost upon Pauline.

"I was under the influence of a spell. Not one word of the past had been uttered by either of us. I felt as if it had never taken place. The present only, which reunited us, was everything in my eyes. Travelling in a foreign country, where I had only Pauline, and Pauline only me, the bonds which drew us together each day, by our very isolation became closer. Every day I felt that I had made another advance in her affection, every day a pressure of the hand, accompanied by a smile, her arm leaning against mine, her head lying upon my shoulder, each was a new right which she would give me again the next day. The more she forgot the past, in thus breathing

every emanation from her simple heart, the more I guarded myself from speaking of love, for fear that she might perceive, that for some time past we had passed beyond the barriers of mere friendship.

"Regarding the health of Pauline, the physician's anticipations were partly realized. The activity, with the constant change of scenery and the recollections it brought out, seemed to benefit her; for it distracted her mind from those sad thoughts whenever an interesting or important object presented itself. *She began almost to forget;* even as the abyss of the past fell into shadow, and the summits of the future were coloured like a new day. Her life, which she had believed ended at the very limits of a tomb, commenced again to exhibit horizons less gloomy, and an atmosphere purer and more easy to breathe she inhaled with her new existence.

"We remained the whole summer in Scotland, and then we returned to London. We went to our little house at Brompton, and we found, as all enthusiastic travellers ever find in their return home, that charm which the first moments always produce. I do not know what passed in the heart

of Pauline; but I do know that I never felt so happy in all my life.

"The feeling which united us was as pure as fraternity. For a year, I had never again told Pauline that I loved her. For a year, she had never made the least acknowledgment of it; but now both of us read in the heart of the other, as if in an open book, and we had nothing more to learn on that subject. Did I desire more than I had already obtained? I do not know, for there was such a charm around my position, that I should almost have feared that greater happiness would precipitate it by some fatal and unforeseen termination.

If I was not lover, I was more than friend, more than brother. I was the tree, poor ivy, to which she clung. I was the river on which her barque floated. I was the sun from whence she received her light. All that existed for her existed for me, and probably the day was not far distant when that which now existed for me would continue ever to remain with me.

"We were, then, settled again in our home at Brompton, when one day I received a letter from my mother, announcing that she wrote to me on

the subject of a proposal that had been made to my sister, which, she said, 'was not only agreeable but advantageous. Count Horace de Beuzeval, who, in addition to his own fortune, joined that of his late wife, Mademoiselle Pauline de Meulien, which he inherited, consisting of twenty-five thousand livres income, asks the hand of your sister Gabrielle in marriage.'

"Happily I was alone when I opened this letter, for my utter stupefaction would have betrayed me. Was not this news strange indeed; some new mystery of Providence, hidden under a predestination which brought Count Horace face to face with the only man who knew him?

"I had obtained some command over myself; still Pauline, on her return, noticed that something extraordinary had taken place in her absence. I had not much difficulty in stating to her that family affairs forced me to go to France. She very naturally attributed my lowness of spirits to regret on my part about our separation, it was the first even for so short a time, for a whole year, from her whom I had saved. She grew pale and had to recline on the sofa. Then

there always is between loving hearts at the moment of separation, although apparently short and without danger, presentiments which, in spite of ourselves, make us unhappy and uneasy.

"I had not a moment to lose, so I decided to leave the following day. I went to my own room to make some necessary preparations. Pauline went into the garden, where I rejoined her as soon as I had finished packing up.

"I saw her seated on the bank where she related to me the story of her life. From that time, as I have before mentioned, as if she had really slept in the arms of death, as it was supposed, not one echo of France had ever come to awaken her; but now perhaps the end of this tranquillity was approaching, and the future for her might look painful, and intrude upon her the memory of the past.

"During the whole of the time that we lived together as brother and sister, it had been my only desire to make her forget. I found her sad and absent as I seated myself beside her. Her first words told me the cause of her meditation.

"'Is it thus you go?'

"'I must, Pauline,' said I, in a voice which I

tried to render calm. 'You know better than any one, that there are some circumstances in life which dispose of us, and which take us away from places which, if we consulted our own inclinations, we would not leave even for an hour. The happiness of my mother and my sister—nay, mine even—pardon me for mentioning the last—depends upon the promptitude which I must use in this journey.'

"'Go, then,' answered Pauline sadly; 'go, where you ought to go, but forget not that you have also a sister who has no mother, whose only happiness henceforth depends upon you, and who would like to do something for yours.'

"'Oh, Pauline!' I exclaimed, pressing her to my heart, tell me, do you doubt for one moment my love? Do you believe that I leave you without a bruised heart? Do you believe that the moment when I return to our present home, which makes us independent of all the world beside, will not be the happiest hour of my life? To live with you this life of brother and sister, with the hope only of still happier days, do you not think that this would be bliss for me greater than I had ever dared to hope for. Oh, Pauline! do you not believe it?'

"'Yes, I believe it,' answered Pauline. 'I should be ungrateful to doubt it. Your love for me has been so refined, so high-minded, that I cannot speak of it without blushing, just as I should speak of one of your virtues. As to this happiness being greater than you hope for, Alfred, I do not understand it. It holds us together, I am sure of it, by the purity of our conduct; and more, my position is strange, and perhaps unparalleled; more, I am now freed from my duties to society; but for myself, I must say that that very freedom makes me in respect of these duties more firm and more decided in accomplishing them.'

"'Oh! yes, yes! I understand you, and God will punish me if I ever try to pluck one flower from your martyr's chaplet, to replace it with one of remorse. Events must eventually take place which will make you free. The life adopted by the count—excuse me for returning to the subject—exposes him more than any other man.'

"'I know it!' exclaimed Pauline. 'I never open a newspaper without a sigh or a groan. The presentiment that I may see the name which I have borne figuring in some atrocious trial—the

man whom I have called my husband threatened with some infamous death. Well, what do you think of happiness in a case like that, supposing that I outlive him?'

"'First, and before all, Pauline, you will always be the most pure, as you are the most adored, of women. Has he not taken care to place you out of the world, so that no stain of his infamy nor of his blood can reach you? I do not like, Pauline, to speak to you in this manner. Still, in a midnight attack, or even in a duel, the count might be killed. I know it is dreadful even to think that there is no hope of peace or contentment except that which flows from the blood of a man. But look to yourself, would not this chance be a blessing almost from Providence?'

"'Well?' said Pauline, speaking as it were interrogatively.

"'Well then, Pauline, the man who without conditions, has made himself your friend, your protector your brother, would he have no right to any other title?'

"'But has this man well reflected upon the engagement which he would undertake in soliciting this title.'

"'Without any doubt, and he sees in it hopes of happiness, without one cause of fear.'

"'Has he considered that I am exiled from France; that the death of the count will not remove this barrier, and that the duties undertaken by me during his life, I will continue after his death?'

"'Pauline,' said I, 'I have thought of all that. The year that we have passed together has been the very happiest of my life. I have told you that I have no real tie which attaches me to one part of the world more than another. Your country shall be my country.'

"'Return to me,' whispered Pauline, in a tone so sweet, that better than a promise, it included every hope; 'return with these feelings; let us leave the rest to the future, and trust in God.'

"That evening I left London, and arrived at my mother's house on the morning of the second day, at one o'clock.

"She and my sister had gone to an evening party at Lord G—'s, the English ambassador. I asked if the ladies were alone, when I was told that Count Horace had gone to bring them

home. I made a hasty toilet, and taking a cabriolet, ordered the driver to leave me at the embassy.

"When I arrived, several persons had already retired; the rooms had begun to look empty; still there remained so many, that I entered without being remarked. I saw my mother sitting down, and my sister dancing; the one with all the serenity of her age and disposition, the other with all the pleasure of a girl. I stopped at the door, I had not come to reconnoitre in the ball-room, therefore I still looked out for a third person. In truth, my investigation was not long; Count Horace was leaning against the wainscot, opposite to where I had placed myself.

"I recognized him in a moment,—he was the same man whom Pauline had described; the unknown, whom I had seen by the rays of the moon in the abbey de Grand Pré. I found in him all I came to seek.

"At one glance I knew him. There was the face, pale and calm, the fair hair which gave him his youthful appearance, the dark eyes which shed over the countenance an expression so strange, those wrinkles on the forehead, which in one

year, and without remorse, cares had made broader and deeper.

"When the country dance was over, Gabrielle seated herself beside her mother. I immediately asked a servant to inform Madame Nerval and her daughter that some one waited for them in the cloak-room. My mother and sister were truly delighted to see me, and as we were alone, I embraced them affectionately. My mother could hardly believe her eyes when she saw me, or her hands which pressed me to her heart. I had made such speed, that she could hardly believe that her letter had even arrived. In fact, the evening before, at the same hour I was still in London.

"Neither my mother nor my sister thought of going back to the dancing-room; they asked for their cloaks, enveloped themselves in their pelisses, and ordered their carriage. Gabrielle then whispered some words in her mother's ear.

"'That is right,' said she; 'and Count Horace?'

"'To-morrow I shall visit him, and you must excuse me to him.' I answered. 'Now, Gabrielle.'

"The count noticed that the ladies had left the room, and in a few moments, remarking that they did not return, he went in search of them, and found them just as they were on the point of leaving.

"I admit that I felt my blood creep when I saw this man advancing towards us. My mother felt my arm tighten upon hers; she saw that my look bore no friendly expression to the count, and with that maternal instinct which divines all dangers, before either of us spoke,—

"'Excuse us,' said she to the count, 'this is my son, whom we have not seen for twelve months, and who has just arrived from London.'

"The count bowed, and in the sweetest voice said, 'Shall I alone be the sufferer by this return, and will it prevent me from conducting you to your carriage?'

"'It is probable sir,' I answered, hardly able to contain myself; 'for where I am, my mother and my sister have no need of any other gentleman.'

"'But this is Count de Beuzeval,' said my mother, turning upon me in an expressive manner.

"'I know him well,' said I, with an emphasis in which I endeavoured to compress as much insult as I could.'

"I felt my mother and my sister tremble also. Count Horace became frightfully pale; still no other sign than this betrayed his emotion. He saw my mother's uneasiness, and did precisely what, perhaps, I would have done myself,—he bowed and went away. My mother followed him with eyes full of anxiety; then, when he had disappeared,—

"'Let us go, let us go,' said she, dragging me with her towards the vestibule.

"We descended the staircase: we got into our carriage, and returned home without exchanging a word."

CHAPTER XV.

"You may easily imagine that our hearts were full of different thoughts; my mother had scarcely got into the house, when she motioned to Gabrielle to retire to her chamber. The poor girl came to present her face to me as formerly she used to do, but my lips had hardly touched it and my arms encircled her, when she burst into tears. My glance falling upon hers, penetrated to her very heart, and I pitied her.

"'Dearest sister,' said I, 'we must not wish for things which we cannot obtain. It is God who makes events, and events control men. Since my father's death, I answer for you to yourself. It is my duty to watch over your life and to make it happy.'

"'Oh yes, you are the master,' replied Gabrielle; 'whatever you desire I will do, be assured. But I cannot prevent myself from fearing, without knowing what makes me afraid, and from weeping without knowing why I weep.'

"'Reassure yourself,' I answered; 'the greatest of your dangers is now passed; thank God, who has watched over you. Go to your chamber: pray, as a young, pure soul ought to pray, for prayer drives away fears and dries up tears. Go!'

"Gabrielle embraced me and went away. My mother watched her anxiously, and when the door was closed, exclaimed,—

"'What is the meaning of all this?'

"'It means, mother,' said I, in a respectful yet firm manner, 'that this marriage which you have spoken to me about is impossible, and that Gabrielle cannot marry Count Horace.'

"'But I am almost pledged to it,' my mother replied.

"'I will deliver you from your pledge,' said I. 'That I charge myself with.'

"'But how, will you tell me; without any reason?'

"'Do you think me, then, so childish,' I answered, 'as to break off such a sacred thing as a promise of this kind if I had not the surest motives for so doing?'

"'But you will tell them to me, Alfred, I think.'

" 'Impossible, mother; impossible. I am bound by an oath not to divulge them.'

" 'I know, Alfred, that many things are said against Horace, but yet they are unable to prove them. Would you give ear to all these calumnies?'

" 'I believe my eyes, mother; I have seen. And now listen to me. You know whether I love you and my sister or not; you know when anything is to be done for the happiness of both, whether I am capable of taking an unchangeable resolution lightly. You know, in fine, in an engagement of this sort, whether I am the man who would frighten you by a falsehood. Well, dear mother, I tell you, I swear it to you, that if this marriage had taken place, if I had not come in time, if my father had not come from the tomb to place himself between his daughter and this man, if Gabrielle called herself now Madame Horace de Beuzeval, one thing alone remained for me to do, and, believe me, I would do it: that would be, to take you and your daughter away, to fly with you from France never to return, to seek in a foreign land oblivion, in place of the infamy which would attend you in our own country.'

"'But cannot you tell me what is the cause of all this?'

"'I can say nothing; I have sworn not to do so. If I dared speak, I have only to pronounce one word and my sister would be saved.'

"'What danger threatens her, then?'

"'None, so long as I live at least.'

"'*Mon Dieu!*' said my mother, 'I feel myself carried away in spite of myself. You amaze me.'

"'Listen,' I continued, 'perhaps after all, this is less grave than I feared it was. Nothing was definitively arranged between you and the count. Nothing was known of it in the world, perhaps only some vague report—some suppositions, and nothing more. Was it not so?'

"'This evening was only the second time that the count accompanied us.'

"'Well, mother, take the very first pretext that comes, to close your doors to him and every one else, the count as well as the others. I shall take upon myself the charge of making him understand that his visits will be useless.'

"'Alfred,' replied my mother, startled, especially by her fear of the consequences, 'the count

is not the man to be dismissed in this manner, without giving him at least a plausible reason.'

"'Make your mind easy,' said I; 'I will give him every explanation necessary. As for a plausible reason, he shall certainly have one.'

"'Do as you please, as you are the head of the family, Alfred, for I will do nothing against your wish. But, for my sake, weigh every word which you have to say to the count, and if you refuse him, still soften that refusal as much as you can.'

"My mother saw me take up my candle, as I wished to retire.

"'Yes! you are right,' she continued; 'I never thought of your fatigue. Go to bed, for it will be time enough to think over this matter to-morrow. I embraced her, but she still holding my hand, whispered—

"'You promise me, do you not, to spare the count's pride?'

"'I promise you, dearest mother.' I embraced her a second time, and left her.

"My mother was right. I was thoroughly tired, and when I went to bed I slept until the following day without turning or waking, till half-past ten o'clock.

"When I awoke, I found a letter from the count, as I expected. It was a model of courtesy and politeness. Here it is.

"'MONSIEUR,—I am desirous that this letter should reach you without a moment's delay, as I do not wish to address you either by a servant or through a friend. This mode of communication, which is usually adopted in similar circumstances, might agitate those who are dear to you, and who, in spite of what occurred yesterday at Lord G——'s, you will allow me to hope are neither strangers nor indifferent to myself.'

"'In the mean time, monsieur, you will easily understand that the few words exchanged between us yesterday, require an explanation. Will you be kind enough to inform me at what hour and place I may expect it. The very nature of this rendezvous compels secrecy, and that no others should be present except those interested; but, if you wish it, I shall bring two friends.'

"'I think I gave you proof yesterday that I looked upon you already as a brother. Think how much it would cost me to renounce this title, and what violence it would do to all my

hopes and feelings, to treat you as an adversary or an enemy.'

"'COUNT HORACE.'

"I replied immediately.

"'MONSIEUR LE COMTE,—You did not deceive yourself. I expected your letter, and thank you very sincerely for the precautions you have taken to insure my receiving it. But as these precautions are useless between us, and as it is important that you should receive my answer promptly, excuse me for sending this by my servant.

"'You are quite right in thinking that an explanation is necessary. Let it take place, if you please, this day. I shall be on horseback between twelve and one o'clock in the Bois de Boulogne, Allée de Muette. I need not tell you that I shall be delighted to meet you there. My opinion entirely coincides with your own, that our first interview should be private.'

"'ALFRED DE NERVAL.'

"After this letter was written and sent off, I went to see my mother, who had been correctly

informed that no one had called from Count Horace, and the answer which the servants gave her, enabled me to perceive that she was more tranquil.

"Poor Gabrielle had asked and obtained permission to remain in her bedroom. When breakfast was over, my horse was brought. My instructions had been carried out, for I saw as he came up to the door, that before the saddle the pistol holsters were strapped to it. I placed in them a pair of excellent duelling pistols, ready charged. I did not forget what I had heard, that Count Horace never went out without his.

"So great was my impatience, that I was at the place of appointment at a quarter-past eleven. I rode from one end of the avenue to the other; when I returned, I saw some one on horseback at the other end of it; it was Count Horace. We had hardly recognized each other, before he put his horse to the gallop, and we met in the middle of the road. I could not help remarking, that like myself he had holsters at his saddle-bow.

"'You see,' said the count to me, bowing courteously, and with a smile on his lips, 'that

my desire to meet you was equal to your own, for we are both before our time.'

"'I have accomplished three hundred miles in a day and a night,' I replied, bowing in return, 'to have this honour. You see, I have lost no time.'

"'I presume that the motives which have brought you here with so much speed are not secrets which I cannot hear; and although my desire to know you and clasp you by the hand had easily determined me to take a similar journey in even a shorter time, if it were possible, than you took, yet I cannot now be so simple as to believe that the same friendly feeling induced you to leave England.'

"'And you believe correctly, M. le Comte, for interests the most important—family interests in which our honour was upon the point of being compromised, have been the cause of my sudden departure from London, and my arrival in Paris.'

"'The manner in which you speak,' replied the count, bowing again, with a smile still more bitter than ever in its expression, 'makes me hope that the letter which Madame de Nerval

addressed to you on the subject of my union with your sister has not been the cause of this return.'

"'You are quite wrong,' said I, returning his bow; 'for I have returned to Paris for no other purpose than to oppose this marriage, which cannot take place.'

"The count turned very pale, and compressed his lips, but almost immediately resumed his habitual coolness.

"'I hope,' he resumed, 'that you will appreciate the feeling which compels me to listen with calmness to the strange replies you make me. This *sang-froid*, sir, is a proof of the desire which I attach to your alliance, and this is so great, that I shall be indiscreet enough to push an explanation to the utmost. Will you do me the honour, then, to inform me of the causes which have made me, on your part, worth this blind antipathy which you express so frankly? Let us walk, if you wish, side by side, and continue to converse.'

"I walked my horse beside his, and we rode side by side like two friends down the avenue.

"'I am waiting for a reply to my question,' the count again commenced.

"'First, permit me, Monsieur le Comte,' I replied, 'to put you right in regard to the opinion I have of you. It is not a blind antipathy as you say, but a thorough scorn.'

"The count raised himself in his stirrups, like a man who had come to the very limit of his patience. He passed his hand over his forehead, and in a tone of voice in which it was difficult to find any alteration, said to me,—

"'These sentiments are dangerous enough, sir, for those even who only adopt them and exhibit them after a perfect acquaintance of the man who has inspired them.'

"'And who told you that I do not know you perfectly?' I answered, looking him straight in the face.

"'If my memory serves me, yesterday was the first time I ever met you.'

"'You are again wrong. Chance, or rather Providence, has brought us together before; it is true it was at night, and you did not see me.'

"'Will you help my memory?' said the count; 'I am stupid at guessing riddles.'

"'I was in the ruins of the abbey Grand Pré during the 27th and the 28th September.'

"The count was now fairly frightened at this speech, and his hand sought his pistols. I placed my hand on mine, and he of course perceived it.

"'Well!' replied he, drawing back his hand immediately.

"'Yes; well! I saw you leave the vault. I saw you bury a key.'

"'And what determination did you come to after you had made all these discoveries?'

"'That of not permitting you to assassinate Mademoiselle Gabrielle de Nerval, as you tried to assassinate Mademoiselle Pauline de Meulien.'

"'Pauline is not dead, then!' exclaimed the count, stopping his horse, and forgetting for this time only, that infernal *sang-froid* which for one minute had never left him.

"'No! Pauline is not dead,' I answered, as I at the same time stopped my horse. 'Pauline lives, in spite of the letter you wrote her; in spite of the poison you poured out for her; in spite of the three doors that you shut upon her, and which I re-opened myself with the help of the key which I saw you bury.

"'*Do you understand now?*'

"'Perfectly,' said Count Horace, as his hand again sought one of his pistols; 'but what I am in some doubt about is, that possessing these secrets and these proofs, why did you not honestly denounce me?'

"'The reason, Monsieur le Comte, is, because I have made a solemn oath not to do so, and that I am compelled to kill you in a duel, as if you were a gentleman. Leave your pistols alone, for in murdering me you would only spoil this little business.'

"'You are quite right,' the count answered, buttoning his holsters and moving on. 'When do we fight?'

"'To-morrow morning, if you please,' I replied, giving my horse the rein, 'at Versailles, if that place will suit you.'

"'Very well; at nine o'clock I will wait for you at the Swiss lake with my seconds.'

"You mean, no doubt, your friends Max and Henry.'

"'Have you any objection to offer against them?'

"'Only this one, that I have a morbid desire to fight with one particular murderer; but none,

should he take for his seconds two of his accomplices. That, if you will allow me to say so, must be differently arranged.'

"'Make your own conditions, monsieur,' said the count, as he bit his lips till the blood came.

"'As our meeting must remain a secret to every one, whatever the result may be; let each of us choose his seconds from the officers of the garrison at Versailles, so that we may remain unknown. They will be ignorant of the cause of the duel, and also prevent an accusation of murder. Does that suit you?'

"'Exactly, monsieur. Now, about the weapons.'

"'Just so. It appears to me, with the sword we might only make some poor, pitiful scratch which would prevent our continuing the duel, that the pistol is preferable. Bring your own case and I will bring mine.'

"'But,' answered the count, 'as we are both armed, what is to prevent our settling the business this moment?'

"'Because I have some arrangements to make for which this delay is absolutely necessary to me; and I think, in regard to this matter, I have con-

ducted myself towards you in a manner to obtain this concession. Whatever suspicion preoccupies you, drive it away, Monsieur le Comte; I repeat to you, that I am bound by an oath to divulge nothing.'

"'That is quite sufficient;' and both of us bowed once more, repeating almost in a breath, 'To-morrow at nine o'clock.' Each put his horse into a gallop, taking different routes.

"In truth the time I had requested the count to give me was short enough to put all my affairs in order, so that the very moment I entered my mother's house I shut myself up in my room.

"I did not attempt to conceal from myself that the duel in which I was about to engage was a very hazardous one. I knew the *sang-froid* and the dexterity of the count: I might be killed, therefore in that case I must assure myself of the position of Pauline, and provide for her.

"Although in all that I have related to you since I left London, I had not once pronounced her name," Alfred continued, "I have no need to tell you that she was never absent from my thoughts. The feelings which awoke in me, after I had again seen my mother and sister, placed

them next to her, without her being wounded. I knew how much I loved her, as the dreadful feeling overtook me when I took up my pen, that I might be writing to her for the last time. The letter however, was finished; I enclosed in it, 'a contract of income' for 10,000 francs, and I placed all in an envelope directed to Dr. Sercey, Grosvenor Square, London.

"The remainder of the day and part of the night was passed in preparing for the future, whatever it might be. I went to bed at two o'clock in the morning, desiring my servant to awake me at six.

"As that hour struck upon the clock, I heard his knock at my chamber door. He was a man I knew I could depend upon; one of those ancient servitors that we find in the German dramas, whom fathers bequeath to their sons, and whom I had also inherited from my father; I gave to his care the letter addressed to the doctor, with directions, in case of my death, to take it himself to London. Two hundred Louis, which I left him, were to defray the expenses of his journey; the remainder he should keep as a present from me. I showed him also the

drawer, in which were inclosed the last adieus which I addressed to my mother, to be delivered to her if my chance was fatal. Moreover, he must have a carriage in readiness up to five o'clock in the evening, should I not have returned before, then to start for Versailles to get news about me.

"Having taken all these precautions I mounted my horse, and at a quarter before nine o'clock I was at the place of meeting with my two seconds. They were, as it had been settled, two officers of hussars who were totally unknown to me, but who did not hesitate to render me the service I asked them. It was sufficient for them to know, that this was an affair in which the honour of a respectable family was compromised, and to accept, without asking a single question. There is no nation like the French in cases of this kind, they are always ready, and according to circumstances, are either the greatest babblers or the most discreet.

"We had hardly waited five minutes before the count and his two seconds arrived. We went to seek a convenient place, which, thanks to our friends accustomed to discover this species of

locality, we soon found. Arrived on the ground, we informed these gentlemen of our arrangements, and requested them to examine our weapons. The count's were made by Lepage, and mine by Devisme; both had a double trigger, and the same bore, that nearly all duelling pistols have.

"The count did not belie his reputation for bravery and courtesy. He wished to give up to me every advantage, but I refused. It was then decided that chance should regulate the places and the order of firing. The distance was fixed at twelve paces, and the limits marked for each of us by a second pistol ready charged, so that in case neither of the first two balls took effect we could fire again.

"Fortune favoured the count twice running. He won not only the choice of position, but also the priority of discharge. He went immediately and placed himself opposite the sun, adopting of his own free will the most disadvantageous position. I remarked this to him, but he simply bowed in replying, that as chance had given him the choice, he wished to keep the side he had selected. I went to mine at the distance agreed upon.

"As the seconds charged the pistols, I had a moment to examine my adversary; and I must do him the justice to say that to the last he preserved the cold and calm attitude of a man constitutionally brave. No word, no gesture, betokened aught but that of a gentleman. The seconds now came towards us, and presented each with a pistol, placing at our feet another ready charged. They then retired to their stations.

"Again the count invited me to fire first. I refused a second time. After saluting my seconds, I made ready to receive my adversary's shot by compressing myself, if I may so say, into the smallest compass, and covering the lower part of my face with the butt of my pistol, the barrel pointing towards my chest and the hollow between the fore-arm and the shoulder. I had hardly time to take this precaution, when the seconds gave the signal, 'Fire!' At that moment I saw a flash, I heard the report of the count's pistol, and I felt a double sensation in my breast and arm. The ball, in fact, had struck the barrel of my weapon, and in deviating from its course had wounded me slightly in the shoulder.

"The count appeared astonished at not seeing me fall.

" 'Are you wounded?' said he to me, moving forward a step.

" 'It is nothing,' I replied, as I took my pistol in my *left* hand. 'Now it is my turn, count.'

" He threw away the weapon he had just discharged, took up the one that lay at his feet, and went back to his place.

" I sighted him leisurely, and with his own *sang-froid*, — I fired. At first I thought I had not touched him, as he remained immovable; then I saw him point his second pistol; but before it could reach an aim, a convulsive trembling seized him; it dropped from his hand, and he wished to speak. But all was over, and vomiting up some blood, he fell down dead,—the ball had penetrated his heart.

" The seconds went first to the count, and afterwards came to me. They had with them the surgeon of the regiment, and I asked him to take my adversary under his care, as I thought him more wounded than myself.

" 'It is useless,' he replied, 'he has no need of the assistance of any one on this earth.'

"'Have I conducted myself as a man of honour?' said I, addressing the group. They admitted my title.

"'Then, doctor, have the kindness,' said I, in taking off my coat, 'to put something on this scratch, so that the blood at least may be stopped, for I must leave this instant.'

"'*Apropos*,' said the oldest of the officers, as the surgeon was binding up my arm, '*where shall we send the body of your friend?*'

"'Rue de Bourbon, No. 16,' I replied, smiling in spite of myself at the *naïveté* of this brave man, 'at the hotel of M. de Beuzeval.'

"I had just finished these words when the hussar who held the count's horse and my own came up. I leaped into the saddle, and again thanking those gentlemen for the last time for their good assistance, I kissed my hand to them, and started at full gallop for Paris.

"It was full time for me to arrive, for my mother was in despair. As she had not seen me come down to breakfast, she went up to my bedroom, and in one of the drawers of my secretary she found the letter I addressed to her.

"I snatched it from her hands and threw it

into the fire, as well as that which had cost me so much pain to write to Pauline. I embraced her as one embraces a mother whom he was doubtful in the morning of ever again seeing, and who was about leaving without knowing when he would see her again."

CHAPTER XVI.

"TEN days after the scenes I have just described," continued Alfred, "Pauline and I were once again in our little house at Brompton, and sitting opposite to each other at breakfast, quietly sipping our tea; she was reading an English newspaper, when suddenly I saw her turn pale, and letting the paper fall from her hands, she gave a scream and fainted. I rang the bell violently, and the maid-servants ran to her. We took her at once to her bedroom, and whilst they undressed her, I went down-stairs, first to read the newspaper which caused the fainting-fit, and then to bring the doctor. I had scarcely opened it, before my eyes fell upon the following paragraphs, translated from the *Courrier Français*:—

"'We have received this moment particulars the most singular and mysterious, of a duel

which has taken place at Versailles, and which appears to have been caused, from motives unknown, by a most violent hatred.

"'The day before yesterday (5th of August, 1833), two young gentlemen, who appeared to belong to the aristocracy of Paris, arrived in our city, both on horseback, and without a servant. One of them went to the barracks in the Rue Royale, the other to the "Café de la Régence." There they had requested the assistance of two officers, who accompanied them to the place of meeting. Each of the combatants brought his own weapons; the conditions of the rencontre were arranged, and the adversaries placed at twenty paces' distance, fired one after the other. One of them fell at the first shot; the other started instantly for Paris, in spite of a severe wound, the ball of his opponent having traversed the point of his shoulder.'

"'He who was killed, was called Count Horace de Beuzeval; the other is totally unknown to any one concerned in this melancholy affair.'

"Pauline had read the paragraph, and the

effect it produced upon her was greater, because I had given her no intimation to expect it. Since my return I had never once mentioned her husband's name before her; and more, although I was aware of the necessity of her being informed, one day or other, of the accident that made her free, still I had not been able to determine how the revelation should be made. I never imagined that the newspapers would anticipate me, and destroy my prudential intentions, in announcing abruptly and violently a fact, so to say, that in the present state of her health, required so much more delicacy and discretion in breaking it to her, than to any other woman.

"The doctor arrived, and I told him that Pauline was under the influence of strong emotions, which had produced a new danger. We went together to her chamber. Poor Pauline was still insensible, notwithstanding the water that was thrown over her face, and the salts they had given to help her breathing. The doctor spoke of bleeding her, and had begun his preparations for the operation, when my courage failed me, and trembling like a woman I rushed into the garden.

"I remained there about half an hour, my

head buried in my hands, and my brain tormented by a crowd of thoughts, which jostled each other, and took no shape or regularity. In all that had come to pass I had followed passively two ideas: my hatred of the count, and my love for my sister. I detested this man from the day that he deprived me of all my happiness by marrying Pauline, and the necessity to me of personal revenge, the desire of giving physical infliction in exchange for moral grief carried me away in spite of myself. The truth is, I wished either to kill or be killed by him. Now that that was accomplished, I saw before me all the consequences.

"In this state of mind, I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was my friend the doctor.

"'And Pauline?' I cried, shaking him warmly by both hands.

"'She is now conscious.'

"I arose to fly to her, but the doctor immediately stopped me.

"'Listen,' he continued; 'the accident, or attack she has had is serious. She has much need, beyond everything, of quietness and sleep. Do not go into her chamber now.'

"'But why?' said I. 'Oh do, dear friend, relieve my mind.'

"'Because it is of so much importance that her nervous system should remain quiet. I have never spoken to you about your position in regard to her. I do not ask your confidence. You call her your sister; are you, or are you not, her brother? I ask this, not as a man, but as a physician. Your presence, your voice even, has a perceptible influence upon Pauline. I have always noticed, and again to-day, that when your name is mentioned, her pulse sensibly quickens. I have given orders, that no one is to enter her room this day, except myself and her maid. Do not therefore go there against my wish.'

"'Is she, then, in danger?' said I.

"Everything is dangerous to a constitution shattered like hers. I was compelled to administer a draught to make her forget the past. She has some recollection,—some sorrow,—some grief which consumes her.'

"'Yes, yes,' I answered, 'nothing is hidden from you. You have seen everything with the eyes of science. No, she is not my sister; no,

she is not my wife; she is not my mistress. She is an angelic being whom I love above all on earth, and whom I cannot render happy, but who I fear will die in my arms, with her crown of virgin and martyr. I will do whatever you like, doctor; I will only visit her with your permission; I will obey you like a child. When shall I see you again?'

"'I shall come back again during the day. Now be a man, and keep up your courage.'

"'If you only knew how much I love her, you would pity me and excuse me.'

"The doctor pressed my hand as I conducted him to the door; there I remained immovable where he left me. At last I threw off this melancholy, and mechanically went up-stairs. I approached the door of Pauline's chamber, but not daring to enter, I listened. At first I thought that Pauline slept, but soon choking sobs reached my ears, and I placed my hand upon the lock. Then I remembered my promise; but for fear of breaking it, I instantly left the house, and beckoning to the first disengaged carriage I met with, I ordered the coachman to drive me to Regent's Park.

"I wandered about there for two or three hours

like a lunatic, amongst trees and statues, and what the promenaders thought of me I did not care. I returned home, and at the door met one of our servants who was running in a great hurry to bring the doctor. Poor Pauline had undergone a new nervous crisis which ended in delirium. This time I could not refrain from going to see her; I rushed into her room, and falling on my knees I took her hand, which was hanging out of the bed. She did not appear to be aware that I was in the room; her breathing was difficult and irregular, her eyes were closed, and some words which escaped her feverish mouth were without either connection or reason.

"The doctor arrived. 'You have not kept your word,' said he to me.

"'Alas! she no longer recognizes me,' I replied, completely overcome.

"At the sound of my voice, nevertheless, I felt her hand shake in mine. I gave up the place I occupied to the doctor, who went to the side of the bed. He felt the pulse of the poor sufferer, and declared that a second bleeding was unfortunately necessary. Still, after the second time of taking blood from her, her agitation continued to in-

crease, and at night she was under the influence of a violent brain fever.

"During eight days and nights, Pauline continued in a most dangerous state, a prey to frightful delirium, recognizing no one, and imagining herself always pursued by brigands, and calling for help. Then the disease began to assume a milder character—extreme debility; a complete prostration of the system succeeded this unnatural insensibility.

"At length, on the morning of the ninth day, once more opening her eyes, after a sleep more refreshing than any she had hitherto enjoyed, she recognized me, and called me by name. I can give you no idea of the sensation that then overpowered me. I threw myself on my knees by her bedside and wept like an infant. The doctor happened to arrive at the same moment, and fearing a return of her feelings, wished me to leave the room, which I did not feel disposed to do, but Pauline seized my hand, and pressing it said, in a low, sweet voice, 'Go.'

"I obeyed. For eight or nine nights I had never taken off my clothes, and being now more reassured, I went to bed and indulged in sleep,

which I stood as much in need of as poor Pauline herself.

"After a time the fever disappeared, leaving little trace behind it, except Pauline's extreme debility. Still, during all this time, the chronic disease of the stomach, with which the year before she was threatened, had made some progress. The doctor advised the same remedy which had cured her before, and I determined to avail myself of the last fine days of the year to take her to Switzerland, then to settle at Naples and pass the winter there. I mentioned this arrangement to Pauline. She smiled sadly at my building my hopes of her recovery upon this distraction; then, with childlike submission, she consented to anything I proposed.

"We therefore, in the beginning of September reached Ostend. Then we went to Holland; sailed up the Rhine as far as Basle. We stopped some time at Geneva. At last we met you at Fluelen, on the borders of the lake of the Four Cantons.

"You now understand why we did not wait for you. Pauline, seeing that you were about to take advantage of our boat, asked me your name, and

it recalled to her recollection having met you often, either at the Countess M——'s or the Princess Bel——'s. The very idea of meeting you again brought to her countenance such an expression of terror, that I was alarmed, and ordered the boatmen to use their utmost strength to get away from you, a circumstance which will account for my rudeness.

"Pauline reclined in the bottom of the boat, I seated myself beside her, and she lay with her head upon my knees. It was just two years since she left France, suffering as much, and as much dependent upon me. Since then I had faithfully kept the engagement which I had made. I had watched over her as a brother, I respected her as a sister; all my thoughts tended to one point, to make her happy, to spare her one single pain, and to contribute every pleasure. All the wishes of my heart turned to one idea, that one day I might be beloved by her. When one has lived long near another, under the same roof, for years or even months, certain thoughts come to both at the same moment. I saw her eyes overflow with tears, she heaved a sigh, and pressing my hand which she held between both of hers, she whispered,—

"'Oh! how good you are!'

"I started to find so completely a reponse to my own thoughts.

"'You think, then, that I have done my duty towards you,' said I.

"'Yes, nobly! You have been the guardian angel of my youth, which for a time flew away; but God has brought it back to me under the name of a brother.'

"'Well, in exchange for this devotion, will you do nothing for me?'

"'Alas! the only thing at present,' said Pauline, 'is to love you. Alfred, before this lake, these mountains, this sky, all this nature so sublime, before God who made them all; yes, Alfred, I love you, and in saying so, I tell you nothing you did not know before.'

"'Yes, I know it,' I replied; 'but it is not enough to love me. Your life must be joined to mine by ties indissoluble. This protection which I obtained as a favour, should now become mine as a right.'

"She smiled so mournfully that I could not help saying,—

"'Why do you smile in that manner, Pauline?'

"'Because you always seem to me to see the future on earth, and I in heaven. No more illusions, Alfred, for they only make my sufferings more severe and more incurable. If I had myself nursed any illusion, do you not believe that I would have informed my mother that I still lived? Had I done so, I should only have had to leave her a second time, and you also, and this I could not have borne. Thus I took pity upon myself by depriving me of a supreme joy to spare me a supreme grief. I love you, Alfred, I repeat, and shall continue to repeat it as long as my lips can utter a word. Watch over me still, so that I may die without remorse.'

"What could I say! what could I do in the face of this conviction? I took her in my arms, and wept with her on the happiness which God had in store for her, and the misfortune which fate had sent to me.

"We remained some days at Lucerne, then set out for Zurich, and descending the lake, arrived at Pfeffers, where we intended to remain for a week or two, as I had hopes that the hot springs would be beneficial to Pauline. We went to visit this healthful source, on which I had built

my hopes, and in returning we met you upon that dark, narrow, subterranean bridge. Pauline almost touched you, and this second meeting caused her such nervous emotion, that she wished to leave that instant. I dared not refuse, and at once we went on to Constance.

"I could now no longer conceal from myself that Pauline every day became perceptibly worse. You have not experienced, and I trust never will, the awful torture of seeing one whom you have dearly loved, dying slowly before your very eyes, counting, every day your finger on the artery, the feverish pulsations, and, so to say, each time with a more intense feeling of love and grief you embrace that beloved form which God created, which now sees, thinks and loves, which a week, a fortnight, or a month at most, will be no more than a cold corpse, without sight, speech, or love.

"Alas, for dear Pauline! As the time of our separation on earth grew shorter, the more did I observe that her mind, her soul, was fortified by those treasures inseparable from a peaceful death. My affection for her had no doubt thrown a poetic feeling into the twilight of her life; but

the last month of her existence will never leave my thoughts, just as the appearance of angels acted upon the mind of the prophets, whom they knew carried to them the word of the Lord.

"We arrived at Arona; there, although fatigued, Pauline seemed to revive so much from the effects of the first breezes of Italy, that we only remained there one night, for all my hope now was to get as soon as I could to Naples. The next day, however, brought new grief and more suffering, for she was unable to rise till midday, and in place of continuing our journey in our carriage, I took a boat so as to reach Sesto-Calende. We embarked about five o'clock in the evening, and as we approached nearer, we saw it sleeping at the foot of its little hills, warmed and gilded by the rays of the setting sun, and covered with orange gardens, myrtles, and laurestinus.

"Pauline looked upon this lovely scene with such a delight, that it gave me some consolation because her thoughts were not so hopelessly sad.

"'Do you not think,' said I, 'that it will be delightful to live in this beautiful country?'

"'No Alfred,' she replied; 'it will be far less painful to die here. I have always dreamed of a resting-place like this, placed in a balmy garden planted with shrubs and flowers. We do not, in France, take sufficient care of the last dwelling-place of those we love. We dress them on their deathbed, and forget the sleep of eternity! If I die before you, Alfred,' she continued, smiling, and after a moment's silence, 'and if, after my death, you will be generous enough to continue the same care towards me during my life, remember what I have just said.'

"'Oh Pauline, Pauline, if you speak thus you will kill me.'

"'Well, no,' she replied; 'but I wish to tell you my desires at once, my friend, for I know then you never forget anything that I ask you. No, you are right; let us speak no more of these things, for I feel much better. Naples will do me much good, I feel; for a long time I have had a great desire to see it.'

"'Yes,' I continued, interrupting her, 'we shall soon be there. We shall pass the winter in some small villa at Torrente or Resina, where you will be again warmed by the sun. In the

spring, you will be restored to life. But *mon Dieu,* what is the matter with you?'

"'Oh, how much I suffer!' cried Pauline, stretching herself out, and placing her hand upon her chest. 'Do you not see, Alfred, that death is jealous even of our dreams, and sends me pain to awake us?'

"We remained without speaking until we disembarked. Pauline wished to walk, but she was so weak that her knees bent under her, and as night had fallen, I took her in my arms and carried her to the hotel.

"I ordered an apartment close to hers. For a long time there had been a feeling so holy, so fraternal, so sacred between us, that as she slept before my eyes, they looked upon her as those of a mother's only could look. Seeing that she became worse than I had ever before seen her, and despairing of her being able to continue the journey the following day, I sent off an express in my own carriage to Milan, so as to bring back to Sesto Dr. Scarpa.

"I went back again near Pauline, and seated myself at the head of the bed on which she was reclining. They had told me that she had some-

thing to say to me, but had not the courage to say it. For the twentieth time, I noticed that look of hers, with such a strange expression of doubt, fixed on mine.

"'What do you wish?' said I. 'You wish to ask me some question, or tell me something; and yet you dare not do it. Why? Often have I perceived you looking at me thus. Am I not your friend, your brother?'

"'Oh, you are much more than both,' she replied; 'there is no name that can express what you are to me. Yes, yes; a doubt haunts me—a horrible doubt—I shall be more myself in a moment, when you will not, I know, deceive me; but the time is not yet come. I look at you, that I may behold you as long as I am able to see. I look at you because—I love you!'

"I took her head and placed it on my shoulder. We remained there nearly an hour; during that time I felt her hurried breathing moisten my cheek, and her heart beating against mine. In fact, she assured me she was better, and begged of me to leave her. I got up to obey her, and as I was in the habit of doing, I was about to kiss her forehead, when she threw her arms round my neck and pressed her lips to mine.

"'I love you,' she murmured in the kiss, and fell back with her head on the bed.

"I wished to take her in my arms, but gently preventing me, and without opening her eyes, she said to me—

"'Leave me, my Alfred; I am well—I am happy.'

"I left her room. I could not remain there, in the state of exaltation this feverish kiss had left me, I returned to my own room, leaving the door half open, so that I could reach Pauline at the slightest noise; then, in place of going to bed, I put on my coat and opened the window for some fresh air.

"The balcony of my room looked out upon those enchanting gardens, which we noticed from the lake as we approached Sesto. In the midst of tufts of lemon-trees, and large laurestinus, some statues on their pedestals were reflected by the rays of the moon, pale as shadows. By concentrating my eyes upon one of them, my vision became troubled. I thought it moved, and that it made a sign to me with its hand to come down. Soon this illusion had so great an effect upon me, that I imagined that I even heard it

call to me. I placed both my hands upon my forehead, thinking I had become mad. My name, pronounced a second time, but in a more plaintive voice, made me start. I returned to my room and listened; yet a third time, my name I again heard, but still more feebly. The voice came from the apartment next to mine—it was Pauline who called me, and I rushed into her chamber.

"It was indeed Pauline. She was dying, and did not wish to die without seeing me again. She called to me, but hearing no reply, she had got out of bed in her agony to seek me, and I found her upon her knees on the floor. I ran towards her, wishing to take her up in my arms, but she motioned to me that she had something now to ask of me.

"It was alas too late, for she was unable to speak; but Pauline, feeling that she was dying, seized the sleeve of my shirt, drew it up with her hand, and discovered the wound, not quite healed, which three months before I had received from the ball of Count Horace's pistol. *Pointing to it with her finger, she gave a sigh,* turned over on her back and closed her eyes.

"I carried her to her bed, and had only time,

in pressing my lips to hers, to receive her last breath, and not to lose her last sigh.

"Her wish was accomplished. She sleeps in one of those gardens which border the lake, in the midst of the perfume of orange-trees, and under the shade of the myrtle and laurestinus."

"I know it," said I to Alfred, "for I arrived at Sesto four days after you left it, and without knowing that it enclosed her, I have been to pray on her tomb."

THE END OF PAULINE DE MEULIEN.

THE STILL-HUNT.

THE STILL-HUNT.

CHAPTER I.

It was about the twilight of a blowy blasty evening, in the windy month of March, that a small party of Highland soldiers trudged patiently along the naked dreary road that traverses the long swampy flats of heathery moss lying between Glasgow and Kilmarnock, and well known by the name of the Mearn's Moor. The party, headed by an officer, consisted of six stout Highlandmen, besides a sergeant and corporal, which, with the ensign who commanded them, made nine. They moved wearily along the hilly exposed road, the cold blast obliging them frequently to put up their unemployed hands to their lofty Highland bonnets, to keep them in their position, and taking great liberties with the short kilts which

should have covered their limbs almost as far down as their knees.

The whole party seemed to be infected with a sort of Highland sulkiness on their march; for the service they were upon was as disagreeable to their feelings and habits as mountaineers, as its principle was repugnant to their prejudices; and the more so, as the officer who led them on being the son of an upstart Lowland Laird, instead of a Highlandman, like themselves, was the object of their dislike and even contempt.

On they went, however, up hill and down dale, as the night darkened down, the wind, every now and then, coming whistling over the black heath of the moor, and together with a chill sleety rain, beating against the faces of the poor soldiers, who had been reluctantly ordered upon this expedition from their comfortable quarters in the Gallowgate of Glasgow.

"Deevil o' a lang road this, Donald," said one, spitting crossly to leeward, and then looking angrily into the face of his neighbour.

"Tamned blasted cauld night!" grumbled the other, looking wicked and askance, and wiping the drop from his nose; "an' no a change-hoose

whar we can get a single mouthfu' mair than if we were on the hills o' Lochaber."

"An' to be sent a stell hunting, amang the coal reek, here in this low country moss — it's waur than the bogs o' Blair Logie; an' aw wi' that parritch-mouthed Sassenach!" said the first, looking gloomily under his black brows towards the officer, who was plashing along the dirty road beside them. "Deevil! to send Donald Magraw on sic a ploy."

"An' to rin at the tail o' a guttey gauger, an' at the bidding o' a Lowland Laird, without a kilt to his hurdies, like a shentleman;" murmured Laughlan, in further aggravation.

"An' aw to squeeze the warm blude out o' the bit bread-winner o' some honest lads amang the hills, puir fallows. But, hoigh! there's a hoose at last," exclaimed the grumbling Highlander joyfully, as they came to the brow of a rising ground and perceived in the distance the comfortable inn of Kingswell, smoking warmly in the midst of the moor, to the rejoicing of all travellers through this waste solitude.

"Gude whiskey there, an' a comfortable hayloft for quarters," replied Donald, much revived,

"Hoogh! Laughey, dinna ye see the fire bleezing through the windows already?"

The little party now moved on with alacrity, and were all into the wide lobby of the inn of Kingswell, and partly in the large kitchen on the left side, before the landlord or his wife were aware of their arrival. "Bless me, what a regiment o' Highlandmen!" exclaimed Mrs. P——, the decent landlady, when she entered the kitchen from an inner apartment, and observed the passage filled with the party; "but come, lads," she added, with that instinctive hospitality which belongs more to a natural good disposition than to the interested character of an innkeeper—"come to the fire, the night is cauld," she urged, as the men hung back with the well-bred modesty so general in the Highland regiments. "Noo just come near," she continued, as they drew gradually in a circle round the wide-spread kitchen fire, "an' warm your knees, puir cheilds! odd, it's a queer thing to gar decent Highland lads travel the Moors wi' bare houghs on such a night as this;" and the landlady glanced down at the brawny limbs of the soldiers, with country good-nature and female partiality for a red coat.

While the subaltern, who had the charge of the party, spoke to the landlord apart, the Highlandmen ranged themselves round the fire of the roomy kitchen, clubbed together for a refreshment of their favourite mountain dew, to which Mrs. P——, then a young woman, generously added a liberal complement of oaten bread, cheese, and milk; and the very maid-servants around whisked about and served with unusual alacrity, being delighted with the presence and grateful glances of "the braw Highland sodgers."

As the night wore on, and the mountain dew within, and the blazing fire without, began to have their effect upon the hearts of the Highlandmen, all this natural and artificial warmth was not a little increased by the love glances and partial services of the two female attendants, who had ample scope for their natural dispositions to coquetry, among such a circle of youthful red-coats; and many a kind look, and interchange of soldierly love-making, and country delight at being admired by the "manly lads," made this a happy evening to all in the big kitchen of the Moorland inn of Kingswell.

Much cheerful mirth, however, diversified even

by the singing of Gaelic songs, was enjoyed by the humble party in the kitchen; and by this time the females of the house, and the warm-hearted Highlandmen, were getting insensibly interested with each other.

But a woman has always a favourite even among a score of wooers, whether she chooses to let it be known or not; and Betty Leishman, the handsomest of the two girls, as she went about her work, behind the circle who surrounded the fire, gave an occasional glance into the faces of "the soldier lads," while she replied to their complimentary jokes, soon fixed her fancy on the round healthy countenance and dark mountain glance of a young Highlander of the clan of M'Lean, whose well-built form and curled raven locks might have attracted the attention of one of higher pretensions than any of the secluded females at Kingswell. Ronald M'Lean himself had a ready perception of beauty, even in the person of the blithe servant in a Moorland inn; and he was not long in noticing, with the warm gallantry of a soldier, and the penetration of a mountaineer, that Betty Leishman's eye fixed itself on him whenever she thought none might observe

her. An interchange of look, a whisper at the convenient time, and a stolen pressure of the hand, soon told, that already there was love between Betty Leishman and the curly black-eyed Highland soldier.

It never had occurred to the mind of the good-natured landlady, far less was it inquired by the thoughtless servant lasses, what was the purport of the visit of this cohort of soldiers to their inn; but as the lads were attended to for the night, and good beds provided for most of them, by the considerate kindness of the landlady and the zeal of the servants; and as, before retiring, Ronald M'Lean contrived to obtain a whispering interview of a few moments with Betty, she, in the anxiety of her heart to learn if this was to be her last as well as her first meeting with her young Highland soldier, asked him if he was to leave in the morning, and if she might ever hope to see him again, at the neighbouring town of Kilmarnock, or haply once more at their own comfortable inn of Kingswell.

When Ronald had informed her, with brief reluctance, that he and his comrades were sent here on the harassing and unsoldier-like duty of

still-hunting—that is, to detect and destroy the distilling apparatus of some smuggling party, who manufactured illicit spirits among the convenient declivities of the Moor—he was surprised at the effect of his intelligence upon the girl, who, unconsciously, uttered an exclamation of apprehensive surprise; but some one crossing their privacy at the moment, they were hastily separated and all went to enjoy their rest; a couple of excisemen having arrived during the darkness of the night, to be guide of the party in their morning's expedition.

CHAPTER II.

DAYLIGHT was spreading slowly o'er the heathy solitudes of the Mearn's Moor, when the Highlanders had already assembled, and were inspecting the locks of their muskets in the large kitchen of the inn at Kingswell. Already also the maids were astir, and while the party had to wait until their stiff and conceited officer was dressed to his own approval, and for the rousing of the excisemen, who had on the previous night taken a stiff cup beyond their usual liberal allowance, on account of the storminess of the night, and were somewhat loath, and not very able to leave their beds, Betty Leishman was serving out to the Highlanders a substantial and hospitable early refreshment. This was succeeded, of course, by the Doch-an-dorous, or stirrup cup, of clear undiluted aqua, the partaking of which always puts a Highlander in good humour; and as she was handing round the customary oaten cake, amid the good wishes and compliments on her beauty

of the party, when she came to Ronald M'Lean, she looked anxious and grave in his face, while he, with gallant freedom putting one arm round her waist, whispered something into her ear.

She drew herself hastily away from the grasp of the bold Celt, when turning round her head at the moment, her eyes fell on the face of the foremost of two men who at this instant entered the kitchen, and who, on observing Betty and the Highlander, gave a slight start and opened his eyes with seeming astonishment, while she coloured and looked alarmed on encountering the eyes of the stranger.

The persons that entered were young men, dressed somewhat better than common farmers; the foremost, whose name was Quentin Bruce, without taking notice, further than casting his eyes round upon the unexpected military party, and then giving a sarcastic smile to his companion, sat down in a corner of the kitchen and called for some liquor.

The Highlandmen looked knowingly in each other's faces on observing the manners of the strangers, and Donald Magraw, the grumbler of the previous night, closing one eye and pointing

to them, whispered to the sergeant, "Do ye see that, Sergeant M'Dougal? Deevil a drap 'o whiskey we'll get on the moor *this* day. The Lowland Laird an' the lazy gaugers hae bitch'd the stell hunting here; so we may just shoulder our firelocks an' gae back to Glasgow, for thae fallows there ken our buzines as weel as I do. Just speer the time o' day at them, sergeant," added Donald, nudging his listening neighbour.

"How does the morning promise on the moor, my lads?" inquired the sergeant, addressing the new comers.

"Neither wat nor dry, Mr. Sodger," answered the foremost fellow, saucily, "but just between the twa, as Davie danced."

"Ye're early out wi' your sour milk, my fine fellows," said Ronald M'Lean, sneeringly, and quite willing to pick a quarrel with the first, for his look regarding Betty Leishman.

"Not so early but we had time to draw on a breeches, Donald," replied Quentin Bruce, looking down to the bare knees and ruddy fair skin of the young Highlander. "But, here, will ye taste my barley-corn? it will help the courage o' your kitchen courtship," he added, holding out his

glass full of whiskey in mock invitation to Ronald, and at the same instant casting a wicked glance towards Betty Leishman.

"Swallow your ain drink, if ye can pay for it, young man," said Ronald coolly; "ye'll maybe need all the courage it can give you, if your Ayrshire breeding does not teach you better manners."

"A pleasant morning for the moors, lads," interrupted the second stranger, slily; "an' Highland shentlemen like the smell o' the blue heather; but there's deep bogs atween this an' the Mearn's Kirk," he added, winking to his friend.

"An' heavy-handed fallows, that kens a gauger's setter frae a shepherd's colley," rejoined the first, "whether it has a breek on its hurdies or no."

The whole party looked at each other, as much amazed at the sagacity of the strangers as at the boldness of their threatening remarks; and quite aware that if they ventured on the moor, there would be more broken heads than bilged casks of liquor to-day.

"An' if Highland shentlemen will come to try a shot on the moors," continued Quentin sarcastically, "they may bag what game they can; but if they come within five miles o' the Mearn's Kirk

to court our lasses before our faces, they had better be following their trulls about the Goose-dubs o' Glasgow."

A general movement of vengeful astonishment ran round the circle, and kindled in the quiet countenances of the Highlandmen at this insulting speech; when, without saying a word, Ronald M'Lean stepped slowly forward, and raising his foot, deliberately kicked over the small table at which the strangers were drinking, while the glasses smashed on the stone floor of the kitchen.

A scream of apprehension from the women gave the alarm of a quarrel, and soon brought in Mr. P——, the landlord, to take cognisance of what was going forward.

"Ye're a brave cheild, though I shouldna say't!" said Quentin Bruce, standing up and surveying Ronald from head to foot; "but as hard heads as yours hae taen the yird on the Mearn's Moor before now, an' we'll maybe see you belyve;" and saying this, he threw down the price of the drink and the broken glasses, and was off with his companion before any farther inquiry could be made.

The Highlandmen would have told their officer and the excisemen what had happened, which

might have prevented any farther proceeding in the expedition for a time; but they were so determined to have a tilt with the smuggling distillers, wherever they were, and to whom these strangers who had thus exasperated them evidently belonged, that without an observation they put themselves in order, and were instantly marched forth under the guidance of the officers of the revenue, to their adventure on the moor.

As they were about leaving the kitchen, Ronald saw the eye of Betty Leishman modestly but anxiously watching him, as if she sought an opportunity of speaking to him unknown to any one. On making this observation, he affected to arrange the long ostrich-feathers in his Highland bonnet, and plucking one of them out, he purposely left it behind him, in the hurry of their late and hasty muster to the door of the inn.

Betty took the hint, and contriving to have him called back from among his comrades after the party had set off, she went out and met him at the edge of a little fir planting that skirted the road beside the inn.

"Ronald," she said, when he came up, "excuse the anxiety of a simple stranger lass; but in sooth

I would like ill to see so many braw sodger lads run wilfully into jeopardy, among the bogs and blackguards o' the Mearn's Moor, an' I just wish to tell you——"

"I've been in moors before, Betty, my kind-hearted lass, an' I have little fear of danger in a common still-hunt," said Ronald, smiling, and looking with admiration into the girl's anxious countenance.

"But the smuggler lads o' the bogs hate the gaugers, and they're o'er-cunning for you," she said, wistfully looking up into the glowing eyes of the Highland soldier. "Will ye take my advice, Ronald," she added earnestly, and returning the pressure of the youth who held her hands.

"I'll jump from the top of Neilston pad, if you bid me, Betty," he said eagerly, and pointing towards the hill in the distance, which bears that name; "but make haste, for there are my comrades wi' their feet on the heather already."

"Then dinna seem anxious to do the gauger's bidding against the moorland lads; an' be sure ye keep to the left when ye come to the brow o' the Covenanters' Cove; an' oh, Ronald, mind——" she added beseechingly.

"Quick, Betty, my pretty Lowland lass," he cried, "I dare not tarry."

"Let no one lead you by night or by day, Ronald, down the hollow beyond the gray stanes to the left; for if ye just set your foot on the deceitfu' green moss o' the Packman's Dowk, ye'll plump beyond help or hope: an' this 'll be the last sight I'll ever see of you."

"God forbid that we should not meet again, Betty, both at Kilmarnock and Kingswell," he said seriously; "but I cannot remember all you have said unless—nay—do not deny me—this moment is too precious; for——" she made little resistance while he kissed her warmly under the fir-tree; and instantly parting from her, he bounded over the heather to join his comrades.

The sun shot pleasantly out across the heath, as the party turned the hip of the last hill, or rather heathery hillock, that shut out entirely the now distant view of their pleasant quarters at Kingswell, and brought them fairly into the black solitudes of the moor. The Highlanders trotted along, in Indian file, through a firm part of the boggy land in high spirits, and seemed to feel themselves as if on their own glorious mountains and glens in

Lochaber or Argyleshire, as they snuffed up the well-known smell of the fragrant heath, and heard the poetic wail of the curlew, echoing from the recesses of the moor; the very bleakness and purple tinge of which, as it stretched away towards the Neilston braes, kindled in their spirits the delicious enthusiasm of their own romantic regions in the north.

"Whish't, Lauchland!" said Donald Magraw to his comrade, as the party came to an elevated spot, which gave an extensive view of the level flats and irregular heights and glens around them. "Dinna ye see a reek amang the brambles on the shaw below? Ea, man! I would like this moment a bit mouthfu' frae the stell-ee, if we could light on't, just to mind me o' langsyne."

"Quick step, men! forward!" commanded the officer.

"But deevil a drap we'll get this day," continued Donald; "naething for us on this moor but a broken crown, as lang as there's naebody to head us but that useless Lowland Laird, that never smelt a peat bog nor saw a whisky stell in his life. See here, he's brought us up to this height just to show us o'er the hail moor, an' bring us into some ambuscade. I tell you what, Lauchey."

"What do ye say? speak low, Donald," said his neighbour.

"If there comes to be clouting o' heads wi' the smuggler lads amang the heather," whispered the first, "just keep in your breath, an' lurch a bit i' the bog, and dinna be o'er-ready drawing dirk or trigger for this feekless laird wi' the breeks. Od, man, I was a smuggler mysel' in Lochaber, an' the smell o' malt an' barley is just a revivement."

Lauchland answered this speech only by a look of shrewd Highland cunning, and the party continued their half-trot in silence.

As they descended the rising ground, they came upon the track of cart-wheels, and now the excise-men, who seemed somewhat uncertain as to their route, gave an exclamation of joy, and begged the officer to follow it. The track of the wheels was, however, soon lost in the irregularities of the heathy ground, which now became more and more boggy and wet; and the commander of the party having sunk several times mid-leg into the mossy mire, to the great discomfort of his gaiters and white stockings, began to lose his temper, and to swear against the guides, that they were

wandering at random, and knew not where they were leading him.

The surmise of the officer was confirmed by the sneering looks of his men, and the evident embarrassment of the excisemen, who halted every few yards when they could get footing, to gaze uncertainly around them, and then at a paper which one of them had, on which was scratched something like a map of the moor, and a direction to the hidden haunts of the distillers. But nothing appeared all round but the dull solitude of an extensive tract of purple heath, only diversified by low hills, among which were deep ravines of moss water which were scarcely seen until the wanderer was at their edge, or had stumbled into them.

The day was advanced, and the men were now beginning to be fatigued and almost as disheartened as their officer at their profitless search, when, picking their steps cautiously to get to a craggy rising ground where they could reconnoitre a little, a tall old woman made her appearance, surprising them by rising up instantaneously out of the heath almost at their feet.

"What do you here, in this lonely place, mistress?" said the exciseman, surprised at the apparition.

"When I speer your business, gudeman, I'll tell you mine," said the woman, with a saucy nod of her head.

A short consultation was here held between the men of the revenue and the officer of the party, as to whether they should talk farther to the woman, and trust her so far as to ask her to be their guide to a certain spot which he spoke of in the moor. The Lowland Laird soon decided the question in the affirmative, and they all drew near to where the woman stood.

"You are well acquainted with this moor, no doubt, good woman," said the gauger.

"I ken where to find blaeberries on the brae face, and soorocks by the water's edge, an' patricks' nests amang the whins, gudeman," she answered. "Come ye a birdnesting, eh?"

"Would you wish to earn half a crown with little trouble, mistress?"

"Troth would I, gudeman," she replied gaily, "half-crowns dinna grow on bramble-bushes, an' ye'll oftener see a black cock on the Mearn's Muir

than a Highland sodger, I trow—so gie me the siller," and she held out her lean hand.

"Will you guide us then to the Covenanters' Cove, and show us the safest and nearest track from that out of the moor by the north side?" said the exciseman.

"Oo, ay,—but just let me feel the white siller between my finger and thumb," added the woman, who did not seem at all willing to trust the exciseman without payment in advance.

"I dinna like that wife's look," said Donald Magraw to his comrade behind, as they went forward where the woman led. "The Lowland Laird 'll no get out o' the moor this day wi' clean breeks, I'm thinking."

"Deevil cares for his breeks or his broken head either," said the other, "if I had something to eat afore we came in clauts wi' the smugglers. This is a tam'd hungersome place," he added, looking ruefully round him.

They followed the woman about two miles further, for now their footing under her guidance was tolerably good, until they got into a more craggy tract, interspersed with occasional patches of thick brushwood and rich long heath on the

face of the crags. The woman had scarcely pointed out the black ravine, called the Covenanters' Cove, where a hard struggle had taken place in former times in the sinking moss, when stealing behind, as the party were anxiously looking out on their search, she totally disappeared, and when they looked round to ask her some question, she was nowhere to be found, but seemed as if she had sunk into the earth as suddenly as she had risen out of it when they first discovered her.

The excisemen looked round them everywhere, more bamboozled than ever at the strange disappearance and unsatisfactory answers of the old woman; they beat the brushwood near, and closely examined the crags in vain; the Lowland Laird stood aghast, and swore that if ever there was a witch that colleagued with the devil and deserved to be burned, they had this day met with one on the moor.

The Highlandmen were now extremely impatient, either to have an affair with the whisky distillers, or to be led back to Kingswell; and as they continued to wander among bogs and brushwood, the Lowland Laird began to think much about the pleasantness of the tat-too, which beat

the Roast Beef of Old England at a certain hour, and to look carnivorous at the black moss, which he did not seem to think would at all agree with his stomach.

Donald Magraw bit a fresh quid of tobacco from his spleuchan with a tug of impatience, and almost spit the tongue out of his mouth from mere anger; and Ronald M'Lean thought it a great hardship that he should have wandered the whole day on this ugly moor, without ever having an opportunity of breaking the head of the fellow who had quarrelled with him at Kingswell.

While they were deliberating in this way, a brace of partridges sprang up almost at their feet, and instantly their ears were delighted by the report of a gun, which brought down one of the birds, and forthwith two persons came running forward from behind the crag. The excisemen looked suspiciously at the two men, and at first seemed uncertain whether to address them or not, for they were not gentlemen who might have been sporting on the moor, nor had they the appearance of farmers, having only one gun between them. The officer, in his impatience, urged the exciseman, and commanding the men to halt, the three

went forward and made some inquiries of the strangers.

After some colloquy, the Lowland Laird coming back with a pleased and knowing look, ordered his men to march to the top of a knoll in front, and there to lie and conceal themselves among the heath, until he and the excisemen should return to lead them to where they should be wanted. The men obeyed this order with a sulky suspicion of its prudence, and shortly their officer and the excisemen were out of sight, under the guidance of the strangers.

The party lay on the knoll for a full half-hour, and still no appearance of their leaders was yet indicated on the broad surface of the moor. A gloomy murmur and a Gaelic oath now and then ran through the whole, until some began to remonstrate with the sergeant for obliging them to tarry on this spot, while their officer might be drowned in the bogs by the treachery of the strangers. "I darna disobey orders, lads," was the only answer of the sergeant, when at length Ronald M'Lean, starting up with eager impatience, cried, "Who'll follow me? and I'll take my chance of disobedience," when instantly the whole followed his example in

mutiny against all orders whatever. After some consultation, it was agreed, however, that only three should separate from the body, viz. Ronald M'Lean, Magraw, and his comrade, and forth they set out to trace their officer and the excisemen.

The three had not gone far, when descending into a black boggy ravine which wound by the spot called the Covenanters' Cove, they thought they heard a voice issuing out from among the heathy irregularities of the ravine; and after seeking about for some time, they discovered the top of a Highland bonnet rising out of the heath, and on going up, found the poor Lowland Laird, sunk almost breast-high in the moss, into which every effort and flounder that he made for his release only seemed to plunge him deeper.

"Where are the gaugers, sir?" said the men, as they assisted him out, in a miserable pickle.

"Damn the gaugers! I hope they are drowned in the bogs by this time," exclaimed the Lowland Laird, looking down at his miry dress, which was totally destroyed; "let us be our own guides, and make haste home, or we'll never get out of this moor alive."

In the midst of their colloquy, they heard the report of a couple of guns fired near, and looking back, they perceived the body of their party running along the ridge of the crag, until, diving down among the bushes, they all disappeared on the further side.

The three with their officer, covered with black moss as he was, were hastening to join the others, when mounting out of the ravine, they perceived, without being themselves observed, two men lurking in a recess or angle of the ravine, as if on the watch for something. A moment more served to convince Ronald that these were the same fellows whom he had seen and insulted that morning in the inn at Kingswell; and whispering an instant with the officer, he, with Donald Magraw obtained leave to hide in the ravine, and watch for a time the motions of the men.

The Lowland Laird and the remaining man had scarcely disappeared over the height, when the two young men, stealing out from their hiding-place, swept round the edge of a swampy flat which bordered the ravine, as if to join more of their party; and as Ronald and his grumbling friend followed them, still unseen, they perceived the tall

figure of the old woman who had so mysteriously dived out of view, start out from behind a crag near, with her head turned towards another party somewhere in her view, to whom she was evidently making signs of direction. Her eye soon caught our two solitary soldiers as they waded through the long heath, and, pointing with her finger, she immediately drew the attention of Quentin Bruce and his comrade to those who were now fast gaining on them.

The fellows at once stopped short, in some surprise at the near presence of the soldiers; and, clutching short sticks which they held, seemed to be ready for an encounter, and stepped forward with a swagger as if courting resistance.

"It's a fine day, lads," said Donald Magraw, with mock civility, as he and Ronald drew near: "ken ye where we'll get a mouthfu' o' gude whisky on the moor?"

"Yes, I do," said Quentin Bruce, his eye glistening with vengeful pleasure, as he recognized the features of the handsome Highlander with whom he had quarrelled at Kingswell; "and I know where breekless soldiers have no business

to come, ferreting through the moors like gaugers' whelps, after our Ayrshire lasses and our whisky."

"Your tongue will be like to endanger your toes, young man," said Ronald M'Lean, at the same time stamping down the butt end of his musket on the sod at the feet of the other, so as to make him jump backwards two paces; when, on the instant, his neighbour springing between Ronald and his comrade, aimed a blow with his black stick at the head of the former, which was, however, parried in the most masterly manner by a ready motion of the firelock of Donald Magraw, while, at the same instant, two other men, getting up like plovers from among the heath near, and rushing among them let fall several hasty blows on the now almost surrounded Highlandmen.

The fight was immediately general, and most unequal both as to numbers and quality of weapons, as well as somewhat savage in its character; for the Highlanders, disdaining to draw their bayonets or to fire, were obliged to act very much on the defensive with such numbers; and

for one heavy blow that they could deal with their muskets, they parried or received a dozen lighter ones from the short sticks of the smugglers, who every now and then gave a shout of triumph or of vengeance, which reverberated among the wild solitudes of the moor; for our two Highlanders found themselves left alone and engaged with double numbers.

It was not possible that this ill-assorted battle could last long without some odd, or, perhaps, fatal result; and an awkward push in the stomach, from the butt-end of the musket of Ronald, soon laid his principal enemy, Quentin Bruce, flat and gasping on the sod, at the same instant when poor Donald Magraw's head, having in the ardour of the fight lost the protection of his large Highland bonnet, received a random blow that heeled him completely, and stretching him senseless at the side of his valiant comrade, left the latter unequally struggling with the three active still-men. Ronald, on this, stepped a few paces back, and poising his musket for a few moments took breath, while, regardless of the numbers who stood opposed to him, he looked

with a scornful pleasure at the person of his prostrate enemy.

The triumph of the active Highlander was very short, for scarcely had he time to put himself again in a defensive position, when the other three men setting up a shout rushed upon him, and he soon fell under their repeated blows, and lay also on the heathy sod, near the others, in a state of complete insensibility.

How long he lay unconscious was unknown to him; but he was aroused from his stupor by feeling some one tugging at his musket, which with instinctive bravery he still grasped; when, looking up, he beheld the swollen face of Quentin Bruce bent over him with an expression of gloomy triumph. By a sudden movement of his foot he caused the other to stumble; then suddenly springing to his feet, the two enemies stood once more singly opposed to each other, for the field was now cleared, his companion, Donald, having been carried off by the others.

"You think you floor'd me, Mr. Highlander, I suppose," said Bruce, menacingly surveying his enemy, "but you're more indebted, I can tell you,

to your soldier-steel than to honourable manhood. And if you have not yet got enough of it, and will meet me with a civil weapon, like a man, I am ready again to give you the other half of such a drubbing, as will keep you from forgetting the longest day of your life your hunt on the Mearn's Moor."

A flash of anger shot from the dark eyes of the young Highlandman, as he glanced upon the other, as if scorning a reply in any other manner but by blows. Instantly catching up the stick of one of the late combatants which lay on the sod, he threw down his musket, and saying, "Now, braggart, we are equal!" sprang once more upon his adversary.

A determined fight was once more commenced, during which the eyes of both shot such deadly enmity, that had their weapons been steel instead of sloe-thorn, a short interval only must elapse before their encounter should terminate in the death of one of them. Soon the heads of both were streaming with blood, when the better play or greater strength of the Highlandman giving him increasing and evident superiority, the other,

driven now to act on the defensive, looked anxiously round for some mode of taking advantage of his adversary, and of saving himself against the danger and disgrace of a retreat which seemed almost inevitable.

By the movement of a few paces of well-timed retreat, he managed to shift their ground farther into the hollow, and near the margin of a black level, at the edge of which stood two round gray stones, towards which Bruce made, as if in the last extremity of resistance. Ronald following unsuspiciously, two or three hard blows were given and received on the edge of the boggy flat, when the Highlander, pressing hard upon the other, by one stroke hit the stick out of Bruce's hand into the air.

While Ronald stood for an instant expecting his adversary to beg for mercy, Bruce, smiling grimly as if it was *he* who was conqueror, sprung forward upon the Highland youth, and grasping his stick seemed to try to wrench it out of his hand; drawing him first towards the gray stones, with one push of despairing vigour he thrust him backwards into the black flat. In two seconds the unwary mountaineer sank down nearly to his

neck in the deceitful swamp, while a last blow with his own stick, wrested from him as he went down by the cunning smuggler, once more took away all feeling, and left the unfortunate Highlander in a state of insensibility, sunk to the chin in the black mud of the bog.

CHAPTER III.

Night had crept over the wild solitudes of the Mearns Moor, and all was darkness around, ere the deadly chill of the wet swamp into which he was bedded at length brought Ronald to sense, and some degree of recollection. During his interment in the moss, his very insensibility and weakness was his salvation; for any movement would have served not only to plunge him deeper, but eventually to smother him in the dangerous morass. When he first opened his eyes and perceived the dull starry sky overhead, and the dark moor-land waste around him, as the night wind whistled sadly from the distant hills along the bending heath, and when he felt the cold moss-earth round his body, he fell into an aguish shudder and thought himself already a buried corpse in this horrid swamp.

Sometimes he tried to make a slight effort to get out, but weakness and a natural perception

of the consequences still confined him: the pain of the wounds on his head, and the excessive uneasiness of the clotted blood in his hair, made him almost resigned to die where he was. He thought he heard noises on the distant moor, as if of persons trampling backwards and forwards on the hollow sod. He tried to shout, but had not strength to give the least voice to his distress.

The poor Highland youth was beginning to relapse into a deadly stupor, when he thought he heard the sound of a light footstep quite near, and opening his eyes he perceived a dull light moving at a short distance from him. He continued to watch the soft tread, and the light still seemed to move about almost on the surface of the heath. At first, he thought it was that *ignis fatuus*, or bog-fire, which has such a fearful appearance to the benighted traveller among swampy moors; but as he mechanically fixed his eyes on it, he again heard more distinctly the slow tramp, and presently a low voice quite near, lamentingly said,—

"Ochon! ochon! for the poor Highland lad: for he's lost and smothered in the Packman's

Dowk: *there* is his bonnet an' feathers; and there are the marks o' his foot beyond the gray stanes. Ochon! for that wicked Quentin Bruce.—Hush! what's that!" added the voice—for the unfortunate Ronald gave a groan, to make himself heard, while the stranger was speaking; and he now perceived the dark form of the tall figure of the old woman, who had been the guide of the party during the day, and who was now seeking about for him: the light he had seen was the dim indistinct glimmer from a horn lantern which she carried in her hand.

She gave an exclamation of joy; when holding down the light in different directions, on the very rim of the swamp, she first beheld the bloody face of the Highlander still over the surface of this dangerous spot, and encouragingly begged him to keep himself steady while she did her best to relieve him. By means of her long staff, and her knowledge of the nature of the bog, into which she was obliged to venture some way herself, she at length, notwithstanding his weakness, succeeded in extricating Ronald from his perilous situation; and desiring him to lean upon her, she forthwith, half dragging him with her, piloted

their way through the solitude, among the heathy swamps and crags of the moor.

At length they came among the brushwood where they had been in the daytime; and stooping behind a bushy clump, at the rear of which rose a knoll, the woman began to pull at the heath which grew out of the face of the crag, which presently giving way in a considerable surface, opened as a door, and they entered into a small warm apartment under the crag.

The place was light and comfortable as they entered; a turf fire burned in the centre, beside which sat a shock-headed boy, and presently a rude seat having been brought forward, Ronald was by a sign ordered to sit down.

"First let me see what ye're like!" said the old woman, opening the lantern, and holding the light close to the pale face of the youth.

"You may trust me, mistress," said Ronald faintly, and understanding her meaning.

"I like your look, in troth, my puir Highland lad," said the woman; "an' I'll soon bring you round: but ye'll no be a treacher to auld Margery," she added, putting her head close to his, with an expression which showed she had once

known how to seduce the affections of a handsome Highlander.

"There's my hand!" said Ronald gratefully; and the woman knew too well the value of such a pledge from a son of the Celt, to distrust him another instant.

"Now, Bauldy," she said to the boy, "bring out the Grey Beard, till I give the puir lad a dram,—that's the first thing."

The Grey Beard was soon produced, which was a good-sized stone bottle, and having, as a preliminary, poured into the youth a hearty bumper of the pure mountain dew which she drew from it, she proceeded to rub his limbs, and to restore the circulation; and then, though she seemed to think his final recovery most precarious, if fever should succeed the ague of the morass, she assisted him to a bed of heath which was made up at the inner recess of the cavern; whereon being placed, he soon fell into a profound sleep.

Meantime the whole afternoon and evening was one of strange and restless excitement as well as much anxiety to the female inmates at Kingswell Inn. The excisemen had first arrived by them-

selves, having been led astray, and afterwards beaten and abused when separated from their party on the moor, out of which they were glad to escape with their lives. Then came the Low-land Laird (followed by all his men but two), in a miserable pickle, swearing against all excisemen, still-hunts, and mossy moors! which he said had cost him in one day the price of a new dress at least; and last of all came groping in when it was late, the mangled remains of Donald Magraw; who after having gathered himself up on the field of battle, or been assisted off, he could not tell which, managed by pure valour and the help of a good bumper of whisky given him by the old woman, to get eventually clear of the dangers of the moor.

In answer to the eager inquiries of all regarding Ronald, Magraw could tell nothing, but that the youth had fought like a lion and a M'Lean! and probably died like a soldier; for it was not likely, he thought, from Ronald's own temper, and that of the still-men, that he would be lucky enough to bring himself and his life away clear and clean out of that confounded moor. This melancholy conclusion was unfortunately con-

firmed next day, on a search that was made in the dangerous part of the morass by two of the party, accompanied by the landlord of the inn himself, who was well acquainted with the general localities of the neighbourhood: for the firelock and bonnet of the youth were found where the struggle had begun, and deep marks near the two gray stones close by gave every confirmation to the suspicion, that he had perished in the fathomless swamp; which, ever since a poor pedlar who passed that way had been smothered in its deceitful gulf, had been known by the name of the Packman's Dowk.

Next night and the following, some of the men who were suspected to be engaged in the illicit distilling on the moor, and in particular Quentin Bruce, were seen skulking about the Inn of Kingswell as if afraid to enter it. On the third night, there being a new moon, Bruce again crossed the moor to the Inn, and watching the opportunity of Betty Leishman's going to some of the outhouses, ventured to appear before her and address her.

"How dare you speak to me, Quentin Bruce?" she said, looking him steadily in the face: "you

need not follow me, for I tell you you are no cousin of mine: and besides, leading away my poor brother to join in this dangerous trade of yours!—your spirit is,—Quentin, I dare not look at you!"

"You never would look at me with kindness, Betty," he said grimly, "although I once persuaded myself that I had won you; but I have something to say to you to-night, and your brother has something to say to you, if you will meet him for five minutes on the moor."

"My brother Mark at last!" she exclaimed; "but why does he not come here?"

"You know it is dangerous for the present," he said, with an insinuating air. "Come, Betty, and speak pleasantly to him and myself for once."

After some more colloquy, mingled with the reproaches of the girl, he, with some difficulty, persuaded her to trust herself with him on the moor, to which she consented, in the hopes of seeing her brother, and learning something certain about the fate of Ronald.

Leaving her business in the inn to her fellow-servant, and throwing her short plaid round her shoulders, she proceeded into the moor by a well-

known path, and found Quentin, who had gone before, waiting for her. "Where is Mark?" she said suspiciously, seeing him alone on the heath, with his light gun in his hand.

"He did not come so near Kingswell. He is just at hand at the back of the knoll, waiting for us," said the youth, pointing down into the hollow.

The girl accompanied him onward in silence, and not without suspicion; and, as he attempted to throw his arm round her, in the Scotch sweetheart fashion, she spurned him with an almost shuddering repugnance.

He attempted similar freedoms several times, as they wound round the knoll on the heath, with no better success, until at length he stopped short, and gazed on her, his eyes flashing with a wild and horrid ardour.

"I don't see my brother Mark," she exclaimed, looking round, and beginning to tremble. "Where are you leading me, Quentin? What do you mean?"

"I told you a lie, Betty," he said, with an ominous smile. "Your brother must not hear what I have to communicate to-night. I have

something very particular to say to you myself," and he caught her round the waist.

"Let me go home, Quentin," she said, looking fearfully up, as she observed the alarming expression on his countenance. "Do let me go!"

"Not a step until you hear me; nay, listen to me, Betty," he said sadly. "Indeed, I am to be pitied, and you are the cause."

"Me!"

"Yes, you have driven me mad by your cruelty, and I do not care what I do. Stay, Betty, stay and speak to me! Will you be kind to me? Will you love me? Will you marry me? I will leave the smuggling—I will bring back your brother—I will do anything!"

"Quentin," she said solemnly, "how can you talk to me this way? what did you do to the poor young Highlandman? Ah, Quentin, you look fearfully! People say he was pushed by some one into the Packman's Dowk, and drowned—smothered. Oh, I cannot look at you!"

"Did you love this Highland stranger, then, better than me?" he said rapidly, and with a look of desperation.

"Yes! a thousand times. Oh, you unfortunate

cruel man! You are a murderer! I see it in your face."

"Do you, Betty?" he said, with a look of calm wickedness that was horrible; "then you are right. If you love not me, you shall never love him. I shoved him into the smothering bog with my own hands. *I* did for him." And, as the desperate young man said this, he stared in the face of the affrighted girl with a look of fiendish satisfaction.

"God forgive you, Quentin!" she only said, clasping her hands, and looking at him with horror.

"Betty Leishman," he exclaimed, "I am distracted, and you only can cure my wild spirit. Will you return my love? Will you leave Kingswell with me, and save me from ruin and shame? By Heavens, you must, or——"

"Never, you accursed man! God be near us—what is that I see? The spirit of the murdered Highland lad seems moving on the heath between us and the moon!"

"Where?" he croaked, with a shudder; but he saw nothing, for the quarter moon was just being covered by a cloud.

"Betty," he continued, hoarsely, "I ask you

again, will you consent to go with me this instant? speak!"

"Never! You wretch, let me go!"

"Then, by Heaven! your tongue shall never bring me to the gallows. I will have you or your life!" and he took up the gun and prepared to shoot.

All the accounts of young women murdered by their proffered lovers, that she had ever read or heard, rushed into the distracted mind of the girl, as she gazed helpless around her into the solitary obscurities of the moorland waste, and then into the scowling countenance of the man, who seemed prepared for a desperate deed. Then falling on her knees, in the earnest language of despair, she begged him not to take her life.

"What do I care for your life?" he said with ruffian coolness, as he stood over her; "have you not driven me mad?"

"Oh, Quentin!" she exclaimed, in horror, still on her knees, "I am your own cousin—I am in my youthful years—I have never wronged you—let me go home, for God's sake!"

"You shall never see another morning if you do not consent to be mine!"

"God have mercy on me, then, for I never fell!"

"Never?"

"Never! I will follow the poor innocent Highland lad first, whom you smothered in that horrid bog."

"The Highlander again!" he gasped out, with jealous fury.

"Mercy! mercy!" screamed the horrified girl, as he stepped two paces back and deliberately cocked the gun. He raised it to his eye, and looked wildly towards his victim, who seemed in a stupor of horror, and presently a rushing noise swept among the heath.

"Christ Jesus!" exclaimed the villain at what he saw; for the form of Roland M'Lean seemed to have started up out of the earth, and stood between him and the horrified girl, the moon shining out dimly upon his pale and patched features, his head being bound with a bloody handkerchief.

"The very dead rise up against me!" exclaimed Quentin, in a whisper of horror, and dropping the cocked musket he fled forth into the obscurity of the moor.

The Highlander lifted up the girl in silence—she

gazed in his face in the moonlight—she felt him warm, and saw his eye burning with admiration.

"Ronald!" she exclaimed, with a scream of joy, "is it really you, Ronald?" and with that surrendered herself to his delivering embrace.

They went together joyfully to the inn; she blessing the Providence that had spared his life, and sent him to the spot at a moment so fearful; for, being so far recovered, his impatience had impelled him to escape from the moor by favour of the moonlight; and hearing the screams, he had crept to the spot and started up at the last instant of danger. I need not say what a happy evening he spent with the grateful girl and the others, a the homely Inn of Kingswell.

Bruce fled for ever from the Mearns, and no one ever heard of him more, within the whole shire of Ayre. But some years after, I was travelling on the borders of the Highlands, and on one of the great northern roads, I happened to stop for refreshment at a country inn, the unexpected decency and comfort of which, in these parts, struck me with particular pleasure. I was soon welcomed by a pretty young matron as landlady, who, upon my looking at her for a moment,

proved to be the very Betty Leishman of my tale; and she was now surrounded by a crowd of black-yed, curly-headed children, who at once fathered themselves upon Ronald, the handsome Highlander, now landlord of the inn.

I spoke to her distantly of former times, and of a certain still-hunt which once took place in Ayrshire; but when I became more explicit, I saw the eyes of the pretty landlady fill with tears of pleasure, as I reminded her of the far away days "when she was a lass," treading the fragrant blooming heath of the Mearn's Moor, or singing at her work in the heartsome Inn of Kingswell.

THE END.

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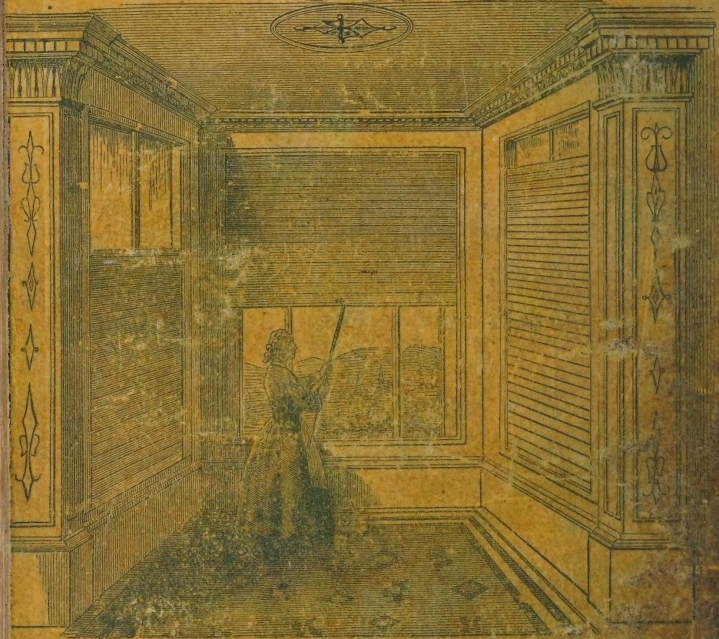

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